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THE REALITY OF JESUS



THE  
REALITY OF JESUS

BY

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M.A.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED LONDON



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TO  
MY WIFE, VIOLET AND JOHN  
A  
TRINITY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS  
TO  
TEACH ME HOW TO LOVE





## PREFACE

THE reality of life concerns every man. Jesus is that Reality. The new thought of men is concentrated on the significance, the nature and the value of human personality. Personality lies at the root of the problems of life. In the final issue, religion will be found to be the sovereign factor in recreative forces. Religion is the loyal and passionate personal relationship of the soul to God. Jesus establishes this relationship in terms of human experience.

The Reality of Jesus is the energy of individual character and the vital power of social reconstruction. Theories as to collective betterment are futile, if the personal will to righteousness is wanting. Spiritual forces in the personal soul are the dynamic of progress.

The Religion of Jesus is the reality of life. If a sense of unreality haunts men with regard to religion, Jesus is misunderstood or misrepresented. There is nothing remote, occult or unreal about Him. He is vital. He strips religion of everything artificial and reveals life. He is at once simpler and deeper than all expositions concerning Him.

The literature of the New Testament is a protest-

against artificial exposition. The Gospels are not formal biographies but impressionist portraits. The fact of Jesus never becomes a dead letter, and the "*Mind of Christ*" is the greatest fact with which the mind of man can come in contact. Multitudes to-day are adrift, uncertain, unhappy and inefficient in life, for lack of the reality of faith. Jesus re-creates belief in God and belief in men. He gives to life its joy, its duty and its destiny. Within the shadow of the world's restlessness lurks the Reality of Jesus, and the demand for a religion adequate to life is the conscious or unconscious quest of men for the Reality of God to-day.

J. H. CHAMBERS MACAULAY.

SKELMORLIE,

*September 1921.*

## INTRODUCTION

UNREALITY in religion cannot long continue, once men are awake to the issue. No creed, no external institution, exists for its own sake. Christianity must possess and convey the Reality of Jesus or perish. The consideration of the deepest things in life will always bring the sense of responsibility and perplexity. Spiritual foundations are not always easily discerned. Facile solutions are not of permanent value. When thought is pushed to its limit concerning the reality of life, the horizons of man's spirit expand and reveal something vaster than the mind can absolutely capture. Perplexity and uncertainty may arise from the depth of man's experience and from the outreach of his hope. The reality of religion is always greater than the immediate grasp of the personal spirit. This belongs to the greatness of the soul and to the mystery of spiritual progress. It is a call upon the soul to put forth all its powers.

There is, however, another type of perplexity and uncertainty. It is the anxious outlook upon affairs, not because of their essential greatness, but because of confusion of mind, bewilderment of spirit, and the



paralysis of moral and spiritual vision. Anxiety of soul may be the precursor of revelation, and the spur to hopeful inquiry and attainment ; or it may be the despair of the heart, and the forerunner of indifference or recklessness.

In a time when the foundations of the great deep have been broken up, perplexity in matters of faith must needs be. A superficial optimism is of no avail, and a depressing pessimism is not worthy.

Reality must be patiently sought and the foundations of faith and life courageously rebuilt. The fate of religion is never in the balance ; spiritual forces are always at work, and the truth of life has a surprising way of emerging. The God of history and experience is alive ; and at the root of man's nature the spiritual instinct prevails. Christianity will not perish, but it will shred itself of unreality in a day of great unveilings. In the long run, the vision will not tarry, and men of faith will have the confidence to wait for it. It may, indeed, be discovered that the times of perplexity and uncertainty are the times of sifting and renewal ; and that beneath the surface of indifference there may be the seed-plot of a new harvest. Human history is the revelation of times of action, reaction and interaction. Old things pass away. Behold, all things become new.

The New Age is then discovered to be better than the old in everything that is vital and real. When ancient moulds, into which truth has been run, are broken up,

truth is not endangered, but it is set free. Christianity reaches us through the line of history. It has taken on the form and colour of past periods. In many directions the mould and form of faith and practice is outworn, and the Reality of Jesus is shaping new modes of expression and interpretation. The Religion of Jesus has run its course for nineteen hundred years, which is, after all, a brief period in the history of an eternal religion. Jesus has been but partially understood and most imperfectly obeyed. If men are entering on a New Age with a desire for a fuller realization and a more perfect obedience to the divine reality in life, then the demand for reality may usher in a new day of finer loyalty and superior faith and service. The demand for reality is the sign of life. It is the peril and the prophecy of a transition period in the intellectual, moral and spiritual experience of men. It creates a new atmosphere of thought and freedom. It refuses artificial restraints. It is intolerant of external authorities. It may be painful in its appearance of even licence, and in some directions there may be a tone and temper that seems irreverent. Such things belong to the nature of the situation ; but in the long run the reality will bear its own proper witness, and the new life will form its appropriate external expression. Meanwhile, all earnest men are anxious as to the future, and as to the moral and spiritual issue of the times. While they have a firm faith in the Reality of God and in the final issue as to moral and

spiritual values, they are deeply concerned as to how the cherished forms and institutions of the past may be accommodated to the needs of the future. They feel called to a discernment of the times, and to their duty in giving expression to the mind of Christ. It is not enough to have a passive faith in an Invisible Leader who has a firm hold upon the manners and the hopes of men. Life demands the organized expression of the Reality of Jesus.

The Church of God must find means to give adequate and vital expression to that reality amid the tide and the affairs of men. The problem before the Church is a serious one, if she is to abide loyal to her Master and effective in her service of men.

How serious that problem is, will be apparent from two concrete examples, which will be perhaps more searching than abstract discussion as to reality. The most serious part of the matter is that the examples could be multiplied. Some time ago I came in contact with a man whose character drew forth confidence and affection. He was a clever and successful man of business and affairs. He had an instinct for literature and the higher reaches of personal culture. His life moved along the lines of clean character and generous action. His moral and spiritual inwardness none could doubt. He had been nurtured in a home of faithful church membership. He, himself, never entered a church door. If you named churches to him, he remained eloquently silent. As our intimacy



grew I determined to push him to an issue in the matter. He gave me a brief and painful reply. It amounted to this: "Organized Christianity has no reality in it." Since then, I think, he is modifying this sweeping judgment. But the fact remains that he is out of sympathy with the creed and practices of the Church. He has broken with, what he calls, traditions and orthodoxies. He had an unfortunate experience in church relationships when the Reality of Jesus was warm within him. I have tried to show him that the whole Church is not to be blamed for a special instance of failure, but he is still unconvinced. The sense of unreality haunts him when he contemplates churches.

The other example is of a different order, but the result is practically the same. I have a friend who has some claim to be an intelligent leader of labour politics. He is clever ; he is intense ; he is a believer in Jesus ; but he is absolutely cynical with regard to churches and what they stand for. He has often turned upon me savagely at the very mention of creeds and ecclesiastics. He fails to find reality in organized Christianity.

Now it is quite true that one has a feeling of unfairness in both these judgments. There can be no question as to reality in the Church, but she is labouring under difficulties from within, and in some directions is under "the dead hand." It becomes all the more urgent for her to find means to proclaim in word

and in deed the Reality of Jesus and to liberate herself from this sense of unreality.

The time may not yet be ripe for creed revision. We do not think it is. The Church is not sufficiently united, and the period of transition is not sufficiently developed for a catholic expression of the faith. An unripe statement would only forge the chains of a new slavery. The New Age will know how to express itself divinely, and in the meantime the reality of Jesus works and instructs.

The fruits of devout scholarship are ripening the time. The possibility of Jesus being clearly seen was never more open to men. Both enemy and friend have contributed in the study of the Gospels to make the Personality of Jesus vivid. Criticism has reached a stage where the ground is secure. The Reality of Jesus can pass from defence to assault. The severe analysis of the Epistles of Paul, the intense investigation of what is termed the apocalyptic literature of the New Testament, have put a new meaning into obscure things. The breath of spring has passed over the whole New Testament, and the Reality of Jesus and the whole view of the Kingdom of God are as visible and fragrant as a garden. Modern men *can see* Jesus. He comes on no uncertain pilgrimage. His consciousness is His self-revelation. His mission is clear and definite. He has disclosed the reality of life. His religion is an open secret. It awaits conviction and obedience. If, through lack

of concentration on her own proper business, the Church fails to convince the world that she has a work on hand of infinite value to men, the failure lies at her own door, and there is no way of recovery but that of repentance and prayer, and the spiritual revival of a new vision and a deeper consecration. If she fall asleep on the lap of Delilah, the pillar and fabric of organized Christianity, as it now stands, will fall in ruins and the Reality of Jesus will pass into the keeping of more valiant and faithful hands. *Unreality deserves to fall*, and the betrayal of Jesus has no future but the doom of Iscariot.

Montague's pillow will not do. "I can," he says, "fall asleep with a religion of open questions." Vital religion is never an open question. It is conviction. There may be open questions for theologies and philosophies, but religion is absolute, so far as its experience goes. It is the reality of personal thought and will and action. Opinions are like our clothes. They warm us, but it is with our own heat. Reality in religion passes from opinion to conviction, and from conviction to quickening, and from quickening to loyalty and obedience. Phases of past revival may not be ours, but moral and spiritual responsibility will take its proper form according to the facts of personal experience and the righteousness revealed from faith to faith.

The ideal lingers, but the confidence of faith is not shaken. The disproportion between the ideal and the



actual has been evident in times past. In the fifth century Jerome cried, "How deeply sunken Christianity has become!" In the seventh, Boniface soliloquized, "The Church is growing old, she is decrepit." In the eighth, Agobard exclaimed, "Purity and piety are almost vanished." In the tenth, Bernard wrote, "All men are set on greed of gold and of silver"; and at a later day Rutherford wept, saying, "The age of faith is gone."

"Ah, Christ, it were enough to know  
That, brooding on the unborn things,  
Thou gatherest up the years that go,  
Like a hen's brood beneath her wings.  
The vision holds Thee, lip to lip,  
Close to our love and makes Thee ours."

The kiss of Christ is on the centuries, and the Reality of Jesus lives in the world to-day. The social re-incarnation of the Son of God is the Church's present day of visitation, and we have the faith to believe that not again will He be put to crucifixion in the house of His friends. The task before the Church to-day may be as hard as any that has yet befallen. To spiritualize modern democracy is the final work of the Kingdom of God, and the Reality of Jesus in the heart is the only power adequate to this faith and service. That it is adequate, the eternal spirit of truth bears constant witness, and a new realization of spiritual power is ahead of the world. The day that unmask disguises

reveals a surprise vision of power ; and I looked, and behold a door was open in the sky. The day of the Church's discipline is the day of her instruction and renewal.

There is a drama by Ibsen<sup>1</sup> in the setting of the period of the Emperor Julian, wherein the author illustrates this recurring lesson in the history of the Church. He shows us first the obvious reason for the apostasy of the Emperor. Julian is embittered by the type of Christianity that he sees around him. He sees something that has lost sincerity and become mean, greedy, hypocritical and worldly: a church that is false to its Founder and without heroic virtue. Bishops and clergy jostle each other in petty place-hunting, and the rank and file have no depth in them. Such is the superficial judgment of the Emperor. In indignation he would find a substitute. Some surprises await the Emperor. He has not looked deep enough. A reality exists that eludes him. The thing he would displace defeats him. Persecution renews it. It purges itself from superficial disguises. It is cleansed by strain and stress. It rediscovers itself. Its softness, levity, worldliness and vanity pass from it. It discloses its inner secret. The soft and silky clergy and the one-time indifferent membership pass under the sword to a new loyalty. The Church learns how to die for its Master. It comes forth from the day of trial with a new sense of the

<sup>1</sup> *Kæiser og Galilæer* ("Emperor and Galilean").

realities of truth, faith and service. Strengthened and deepened by days of stress, the faith of Christianity passes into a New Age of better things.

"Alone the task was wrought;  
Alone the battle fought."

The cleansed heart of faith receives a new vision and a new experience of reality. From the hot Persian sands of his defeat, the cry goes forth from the lips of the dying Emperor that proclaims the conquest of Jesus.

It is with a firm conviction that in these last days of inquiry the Christian Faith has received an inward renewal, that the following chapters are written. Amid all confusion the New Age that is begun is an Age desiring better things. The desire is somewhat blind, and even violent in its expression. Nevertheless, the desire for the truth of life and the enrichment of its relationships is the prophecy of a new future. The desire needs cleansing and discipline. In the experience of this purification nothing concerns the times more than the Reality of Jesus, disclosing as it does the verity of God, the truth of religion, and the spiritual, moral and rational foundations of life.



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# THE REALITY OF GOD





## I

### THE FIGURE IN THE CARPET

THE supreme thing concerning the free personal spirit of man is his self-consciousness. He desires to know things. He chiefly desires to know concerning himself. Whether his mind and spirit searches the windy spaces of light or seeks to interpret the darkness of the night, he is bent on inquiry. He would understand whence he comes, whither he goes, and he desires some intimate sense of his present circumstance and relationship. It is this sense of personality in surroundings that forces questions of nature, character and destiny. "The Figure in the Carpet" allures and fascinates. The moral and spiritual meaning of things is the pressure of progress. It is the urge and drive within the conscience, the mind and the heart. It constitutes the way of man's spirit. When man inquires concerning himself, he is on the road of a high enterprise and a quick adventure. The interpretation of the "Figure in the Carpet" is the quest of life. The final goal is found to be God, and the venture of the soul is the discovery of the reality of religion and experience. There are many surprises by the way.

The way of history, the experiences of the hour, the inner vision of things, and the external relation-

ships of life, all contribute a complex and subtle problem. It is not enough to see the colour and design in the Carpet ; it is the inner interpretation of its mystery that gives fascination to the fields of knowledge, and the range of man's thought concerning himself. It belongs to the men of to-day to get a clearer and more definite vision of the web of life. As knowledge multiplies, the need for an orderly conception of nature and life becomes all the more important. The mind must pass from the bewilderment and perplexity of disorderly information to some central point of vision and interpretation. The " Figure in the Carpet " should never be allowed to become a mere baffling of the mind, or the passing of the colours of a kaleidoscope. The many coloured plot of the design is not intended to obscure, but to illumine. An age of analysis and of discovery may pull things to pieces. The resources of knowledge may seem to be destructive. The design hangs, as it were, in unravelled pieces. This is a temporary situation. The ultimate discovery is the unity of knowledge and of the correlated facts that indicate the intention of life in its varied colour of circumstance. Modern thought has reached the stage of reconstruction. Analysis is passing into a new stage of constructive concentration. A jubilant agnosticism is seen to be a vain thing. The real joy of an entrance into knowledge, faith, experience, life and religion proclaims man's new day of a deeper spiritual discernment. Personality is seen to demand more than materialism can supply.

An age of physical science is passing into an age of a new psychology and an epoch of new spiritual awaken-



ing. New thought is boldly stating the proportion and value of things. The exaggerated devotion to the physical elements in the structure of the Universe and in the colours of the "Figure in the Carpet" is giving place to a deeper insight into the meaning of man's will, personality and endeavour. The design of man's destiny and duty is being seen from the centre and not from the circumference. The Reality of God is a starting-point in modern thought more than an ultimate mystery. Man is seeking to realize himself at the centre. Personality is sovereign. Conditions are secondary. The New Age is looking for the soul of things in life and society. Destructive criticism is giving place to constructive reality and spiritual idealism. A very little calm reflection shows that to reach the right method of approach is the truest way to the solution of man's mystery and majesty in his sense of personality and destiny.

It gives intensity to the quest and adventure of life. The age of materialism contributed much to the discovery of circumstances and conditions. It left the soul of things dull and colourless. Personality had ceased to possess the high sense of life's significance. Force had become a menace, externals a slavery. Law, as a science of life, had become a tyranny in which the soul could neither breathe nor pray. Happiness had become a delusion in the lusts for externals and in the hunger of the heart being unsatisfied. The times had become trivial; the days of man's life a coarse struggle; and duty a dull routine. Some were content to have it so; others remained numb, living a kind of half-life, in the paralysis of the spiritual. The "Figure in the

Carpet " : life's secret and high adventure had become a struggle for existence instead of a mystery, a faith and a joy. The tone and temper of life had become a dull and mechanical pattern of things, with neither wistful desire nor soul-adventure. Selfishness was passing into a creed, and society into a chaos of strife. The whole situation had become *unreal*. Neither science nor religion could continue honourable and healthy in such a relationship. The reaction has arrived ; the position is not yet cleared, but it is clearing. Foreheads are being lifted to the sky again, and a new thoughtfulness and a new earnestness is moving over the surface of "the face of the deep." The new desire for reality pervades the minds of men. A sense of the wonder and inner secret of things is touching all modern thought. Much that is revolutionary, both in culture and religion, is felt if not expressed. The soul of man in every department of knowledge and relationship is "instinctively sensing things." A new day is on the way in troublous times.

Religion itself has passed through the period of unsettlement. The compasses of faith have had a series of trials, and are practically now adjusted. Religion, like everything else, must be tested by reality. In the England of the olden time, during a period that witnessed the first foregleams of spiritual revival under Master Wycliffe, we see the same sensing of reality as the forerunner of the new day. History records a quaint conversation on the roadway of common life. Two clergymen at Leicester are in need of fuel to cook their victuals. "Here," said one, "is an image of St. Catherine. Let us make her a martyr once more !" Then taking up a hatchet he said,

"Let us see if she will bleed ; if not, she will help us to boil our cabbage." "I promise," says another, "to assoil you, even though you do not know your creed." "To tell the truth," says the inquirer, "I have not a penny to pay for my meat ; I work for my food, but if you would teach me my creed for the love of God, I would reward you when it is in my power." "Really," says the friar in reply, "I take you for a fool. You want to catch fish and will not wet your feet. Farewell." Truly history has ways of repeating itself.

Reality in religion is the prelude to any new age. This reality is a deciding factor in all recreating energies that would reinterpret the "Figure in the Carpet" and reconstruct society. The Reality of God does not lurk behind the rusting doors of temples in decay. It lives at the heart of a new age and in the spirits of living, thinking and 'morally earnest men. Some epochs are ushered in with preludes of violence, when men, overwhelmed, crouch within decaying shrines and wait in fear. Other periods of progress slip in with the quietude of invisible forces ripening to their manifestation, with the power of silent and irresistible forces. Whether it be after this or that fashion, modern thought and life is passing into a new age of reality, and, as we believe, of spiritual power and realization. The brief day of materialism is ended. Science has its deepest word yet to speak to life. The "Figure in the Carpet"—the personality and the faith and the duty and the destiny of man—is charged with spiritual energies and hopes that cannot be ultimately frustrated. One of the first demands the Reality of Jesus makes, is the discernment of the



times. If Pharisees and scribes cannot interpret the moral and spiritual horizons of the time, the reality of life passes into new and other leadership. The design and colour of life's mystery and responsibility is woven with the shuttle of the divine image and purpose. It is real.

The victims of unreality may sit within their city and beneath the shadow of their temple, with minds that roll backward and forward like a ball in a circular runway, and find no goal. They may revolve their traditions and their rituals with the distracted faculties of a sick man. They may sit and wait and hope and crucify the truth, but living thought and actual events pass them by and reality discloses itself. There is neither fear, superstition nor magic in the reality and religion of Jesus. He moves into the midst of life. He comes quietly on the stage of the world's history. He interprets personality and life. He reveals God and He unveils man. He discloses love and righteousness, and He abides always, making life manifest, discerning the time and proclaiming the reign of God as at hand. He comes thus to every age, disclosing the line of spiritual progress, redeeming moral failure, liberating the channels of human thought and giving hope to expectant and waiting souls. He not merely comes, but He comes in relation to the past and guaranteeing the future. He comes, not to destroy, but to fulfil. He comes in ways that surprise men, overthrowing their miscalculations and opening the eyes of the blind. His voice is not heard in the street, but the channels of life are cleansed and the quietude of spiritual forces is made quick on the earth, and the revolutions of righteousness are brought



to pass. The witness of the prophets of spiritual things takes on a new significance, and reality enters into a new life in the thoughts and purposes of men. "Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe in the gospel."

There seemed no ripeness either in the moment or the manner of His coming. To the outward observation of those who professed some skill in moral discernment nothing particular seemed to have arrived. Indeed the experts said that the reality was a deception and a delusion, and that it was a danger amid the restlessness and revolutionary movements of the multitude. The Rabbis sat in their chambers and sent forth messages of hope concerning the kingdom of their desire, and set their hearts on the refortification of their moribund institutions : without any intimation within them that the doom of history was already on their shrine, and that rust was upon its golden doors. In such an hour as men knew not, the reality came, not with observation, with neither "Lo here!" nor "Lo there!" but, "Behold, the reign of God is in the midst of you." It was an invisible work, but the day of the Cross declared it. Jesus as the Reality of God discloses the design of life. The resources of spiritual energy fill again the exhausted channels of the world's need. Something more than the despairing hope of an ideal enters into the hearts of men. Jesus is not the ghost of an idea floating in the imagination of man's thought, nor a pale gesture in the twilight of man's half-blind endeavour. He is manifested light and life, bringing salvation. Thus He comes

renewing the age and fulfilling the times. He becomes the supreme secret of the personal heart and the re-creative spiritual energy of the total relationships of life. He interprets the design in the Carpet. "I am glad," says quaint Samuel Rutherford, writing in his blithesome way to the Lady Kilconquhair—"I am glad you came to this life about a necessary and a weighty business to tryst with Christ ; and your other adoos, beside this are but toys and feathers and dreams and fancies. I know that other lovers beside Christ are in suit of you, and your soul wanteth not many wooers ; but, I pray you, make a chaste virgin of your soul, and let it love but one. I would rather look but through the hole of Christ's door to see but the one-half of the fairest and most comely face than to enjoy the flower, the bloom and the chiefest excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds." The modern world is filled with many voices. There are many cries in the street. Society and Industry have many wooers. The "Figure in the Carpet": the problem of life has many high priests and interpreters. Toys and feathers and dreams and fancies flit before the imagination. Men come at last to their spiritual necessities. The soul asserts itself in the colour and the design of life. The Reality of Jesus lives. It recreates the heart and redeems society. Jesus brings God into life as the supreme fact for character, institutions and progress. It is for this forgotten and neglected fact that the New Age waits. The reality of God discerns the times. Spiritual revival and ethical progress begins in the rediscovery of the fact of God.

The reality of this is not merely a matter for experts

in so-called religion. It is the central experience of the human heart. The plain fact lies on the broad face of history and experience. Man advances through the vision of God. The vision is for the man in the street. The Reality of Jesus walks there. Until men meet the challenge of God every day, the adventure of life has not begun. Spiritual revival is the first step in progress. Without it the "Figure in the Carpet" is but a dull mechanical pattern. It has neither the allurements of mystery nor the fascination of high endeavour. A new moral seriousness and a new joy of living must pass into things if the hopes of men are to be realized and the desire for social betterment is to be attained. Theories must centralize on some supreme reality. We are told that the late Professor Huxley, when engaged in a public lecture, received a severe electric shock in carrying out one of his experiments. For the moment he became unconscious to his surroundings and to his own self-action. His mental vision first returned to him, and he had the memory that he was engaged in a public exposition. He tells us that his physical vision lingered, and that for a time he saw himself as if dismembered—a limb here and a limb there—he was conscious of this as he came slowly to himself and recovered his total poise of personal will, thought and action. This in part illustrates the confusions of men, half awake to the moral and spiritual issues of life. Things are seen as if disjointed and unrelated. They are not centralized, and until a complete consciousness is established, there is no advance. The New Age requires to come to spiritual realization, and the personal soul to the reality of vision. It is an ancient prayer, but it is new every

morning and fresh every evening. "Unite my heart, O Lord, to fear thy name." Until God is seen and His knowledge and love acted upon, life is unreal and social betterment is paralysed. The Reality of Jesus is the challenge to this experience. Without the vitality of religion in the personal heart, men are playing with the "Figure in the Carpet" and engaging themselves with toys and feathers and dreams and fancies. The interpretation of life begins in God, and its revelation ends in Him. First things come first, and the Reality of God is the first step on the way to any adequate interpretation of the colour and the design of life. The fact of God is the challenge of thought and of experience.



## II

### THE CHALLENGE

THE wonder of the world and the inner experiences of the thought and the heart are a divine challenge to man. He is called upon to discover and to know. Mere curiosity may dabble and dig among roots and destroy the fairest plant. Clever people may so crowd their brain with ideas as to obscure reality and confuse the issue ; so many weeds can grow and gather round a flower, that it becomes invisible even if it is not killed.

The great ones of the earth used to speak of cause and effect ; now, they talk of cosmic purposefulness. It is all to the good. We may meet the challenge in the beginnings of things, or we may watch a process. The fact is superior to every variety of attitude. The reality of things is that they are, and that they consist in relationships.

We are told that the origin of Florentine painting still remains wrapt in obscurity. Be it so—this in no way hinders our joy in "The Death of St. Francis," by Giotto ; or "The Vision of St. Bernard," by Filippino Lippi. It would be a strange contortion of the reality of thought if the picture was denied an authorship including imagination, mind, will, purpose and execution. It would be a stranger con-

tortion, if the authorship of definite work was merged and lost in the production. It is the work of the prophet and the schoolmaster to assist men to understand and to enjoy. One of the most difficult and necessary tasks is to place and understand the Reality of God, not merely in a universe of things, but in the mind and conscience of man. The fact of God is not to be explained away. It is a reality to be realized, and to be realized in self-conscious relationship. The prophet may be a realist or a deemster, but he deals with reality. The challenge of the mind and heart is unavoidable. It may be ignored, or retreated from, but in the issue it asserts itself. The structure of things, the course of history, the experience of life, are all charged with the fact and the interpretation of the "Inevitable God." This is the menace and the majesty of thought. The divine challenge is at the focus of life. The fact of a personal mind and will at the back of things, and in constant operation, is the conviction of the human mind. It becomes a living certainty. It is a conviction of the mind. It is more deeply an intuition of the soul. It is not an assertion of fate, so much as a comforting assurance of the heart. The religious sense meditating on the things that are, reaches conclusions of faith and love. The reality of life is not discovered in a superstitious cavern of the mind. It is realized by the free spirit under the open sky.

The challenge is very definite, though it reaches men in a complex variety of ways. The sovereign thinking is reached when the mind and heart attain to the unity of the splendour of God. Every field of modern knowledge is more fully unveiling that

splendour. If knowledge is not joined to moral and spiritual responsibility, the challenge is not met. All the culture in the world is ineffective, if it does not culminate in right feeling and soul realization. The fact of God is not merely a challenge to thought. It is the supreme challenge to living. The reason of man must do something more than play round reality with a kind of lazy idealism, reaching out to fragmentary horizons and clutching at points of knowledge on the circumference of life. The facts are too varied, too numerous, sometimes too cruel and overwhelming to be gathered into broken conclusions and superficial idealisms. Thought must have a centre. The chief difficulty of most men is their confusion both as to realities and issues. It is no use drawing tangents to the segments of a circumference, if the centre of the circle is unknown. Men are left without the power to strike a diameter, and the angle of the circumference cannot be calculated. We suggest that this is the failure of the poltroons, that hang on to the skirts of idealism without the reality of a belief in God. Life demands a science that can face and interpret the facts without dismay and without failure. No man can understand the crises of history, the needs of his fellow-men, and the necessities for his own soul and life, unless he has some clear experience of the Reality of God. Lack of inclination, lack of patience, lack of time, lack of devoutness, lack of humility, keep men from the clear out-thinking of their own problem and the need of a central interpretation of life. They stumble like drunken men in the blind byways of experience, with no key to history and no working faith as to their own duty and destiny.

The Reality of Jesus is nowhere more evident than in His radiant starting-point, the centre from which He directs men, amid the challenge of events. He starts from this centre—God is, God knows, God understands, God works. God in men and man in God covers the whole ground, wherein we have the will to love and the will to righteousness. The challenge of the fact of God confronts not merely the mind. It throws down the glove to the conscience and the heart. It challenges the whole field of history and experience in the encounter of moral endeavour and spiritual progress. The sense of God is not a calculated attitude of mind in relation to things, it is a living experience of the total faculties of the personal life. There are various kinds of knowledge.

The knowledge of God is, an intimate sense of relationship in the complete realization of character, duty and destiny. It results in an attitude to thought and life which constitutes religion, spiritual discovery and moral responsibility. The realized fact of God is the supreme experience of life. To disentangle this fact amid confusions and bewilderment and to make the religious sense vital and truthful is a supreme need. Modern life is in danger of being overwhelmed by its own achievements, and men are in danger of becoming victims of their own resources. The weary desire of men is, in a dumb way, sensible of this. The instinct of the challenge works :

“ Grows quick with God’s creating breath ;  
While even the immaterial mind below  
And Thought her winged offspring, chained by power,  
Pine silently for the redeeming hour.”



Modern democracy must meet this divine challenge of spiritual forces or fail. The suspense of expectation fills the intellectual, moral and social outlook of the hour. There is a movement of response to the challenge among the "intellectuals." Reality has surprising ways of reasserting itself; even profane stumblers in the science of history and the art of living are on the look out for a religion and in search of a god. Mr. H. G. Wells states the core of his faith to be "a profound belief in a personal and intimate God." It is the handsome and frank confession of an Ishmaelite in the wilderness of spiritual desire.

A gifted but unhappy Irishman once wrote a whimsical essay on "The Decay of the Art of Lying." It was an attack on the unreal. Once, in an encounter with a group of Pharisees, Jesus thus retorted: "Ye did not have a personal experimental knowledge of God (*γινώσκειν*), but I know him directly (*εἰδέναι*); and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar." This was a severe thrust, but an illuminating reference. It was the challenge at the sword-point. It brought the insolence of self-complaisance to an issue. It laid bare the soul of reality. It placed the reality of God in the arena. "Whether we are mortal or immortal, whether the God of our hearts is a son or a rebel against the universe, the reality of religion, the fact of salvation, is still our self-identification with God irrespective of consequences. Whether we live for ever or die to-morrow does not affect righteousness. God is my immortality. What of me is identified with God is God. What is not is of no more permanent value than the snows of yester-

year." It is voices like this in the wilderness that give hope to modern thought and effort.

These voices multiply in unexpected places. The loss of God is felt amid the tide and passion of the affairs of men.

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God ;  
It will flame out, like shinning from stook foil,  
It gathers to a greatness like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod ?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod ;  
And all is seared with trade ; bleared, smeared with toil ;  
And bears man's smudge and shares man's smell, the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel being shod.  
And for all this, nature is never spent ;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things :  
And though the last lights from the black west went,  
Oh ! morning at the brown brink eastwards springs,  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast, and with, ah ! bright wings."

That this sense of God should steal into life and give men vision and obedience, is the essence of life's challenge. It is the living nerve of religion at the centre of life. Its discovery is deeper than the logic of the mind, higher than the wings of emotion, clearer than the science of the sod, and larger than the out-reach of action. Without it, the encounter of life paralyses faith and activity. It is the secret of the divine Fatherhood. It glows in the Reality of Jesus, not merely as a thought to be rested in, but as a life to be ardently lived. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This is the divine experience that

holds men amid the harsh encounters of life. It re-creates the soul, and being seen and lived remakes society. The Reality of God in love and righteousness challenges the thought and action of men. "Come," says Luther to Melanchthon in the very midst of the strife and amid the challenge of events that ushered in a new age—"Come," says the man of action to the man of thought, "I will touch my violin to a harmony of the Evangel, and let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm, 'Be still, and know that I am God.'"

This is the pause in life's challenge that transforms the encounter of experience into a soul-song to a violin obligato. When modern passions born of earth are stilled to chant the great litany to the Reality of God, the morning of a new day will be "at the brown brink eastwards." Even a little part—a wandering breath of that high melody sung in the heart—has power to transform life. "Be still—and know." This is the supreme pause in thought and experience. It is the divine challenge in the heart. It lays an arrest on the tone and temper of the soul and of society. The passion of the hour is filled with activity and restless endeavour. The divine silence of the inner challenge is not for ever evaded. A sudden chill, a sudden thought, perhaps a fear, and the soul, down amid the half-lights of the world, becomes awake to reality. This is the beginnings of the essence of religion in the mind and heart. It lays an arrest upon the vision and the will. It establishes a personal and conscious relationship with God. It is the intense hour of life. It is the silence of realization amid the encounter of life. It is the prelude in the heart to the song of the great litany. It is the response in the complete

personal experience to the challenge of the thought of God. Science and religion, progressive knowledge and the life of faith, cease to live at cross purposes. The immanent God is the transcendent God of the personal experience.



### III

#### THE LITANY

THE thoughts of modern men concerning God have passed into a new world of ideas and their relationships. The litany of universal life has transformed theologies and created a new world for the soul. The transformation is more in an attitude of thought than in a change of vital ideas. No intelligent person to-day talks of a contradiction between religion and science. The challenging cries between materialism and orthodoxy are echoes down the wind. The reality of religion is more clearly seen and the terms in which science speaks have become at once broader and deeper. "Truth is catholic and nature one." For instance, no one discusses prayer to-day in the terms of a Huxley controversy. It would be carrying a sacred thing for investigation to the warriors of Boadicea. The strife of tongues, in the same manner, concerning the early chapters of the Bible and the discoveries of Darwin and Spencer, are as if one talked around a camp fire in the days of the Heptarchy. Discussion has had its peaceable fruits. The New Science and the New Thought are not occupied in raking the ashes of old camp fires. Readjustments and right adjustments in the region of knowledge have all contributed to a

clearer atmosphere of thinking and a wider range of experience.

Religion in terms of knowledge moves free in the open field of thought. It states the facts that belong to the science of the soul with fearlessness and freedom. It breathes the open air, and has ceased to sit in the smoke of a night camp fire. Physical science also has taken on a new tone and a new temper. The field of discovery is wider and the relation of facts to the total sum of things is clearer. The study of stones has passed to the investigation of a universe. Truth in its wider range does not create antagonisms. It forms friendships. There is a new sense of reality and a new realization of unity in the discoveries of matter and of mind. There is seen to be a soul in things. The new physics and the new psychology have created the World of the New Realists. The struggle for the freedom of thought has brought into being a new world of hopes and certainties. Sulky argument has given place to happier understandings. Voices are no longer harsh across a bleak waste of darkened thought. The litany has begun. Fear has given place to faith in every region of man's splendid effort to know. God is being realized in a new way in an old world.

" A fire mist and a planet,  
A crystal and a cell,  
A jelly fish and a saurian,  
And caves where cavemen dwell;  
Then a sense of law and beauty,  
And a face turned from the clod,  
Some call it evolution,  
And others call it God."

The immanence of God is not a new idea, but it is realized in a more universal sense and accepted with a new and happier attitude of mind. "By the Spirit of God were the heavens garnished," is a very ancient song. The new litany, however, has put a new import into the new sense of the divine life in all creation and in the heart of man. How far-reaching is this attitude of the modern mind, has a kind of grotesque illustration in the new study of mathematics. To some of us, with the memories of youth still fresh, the very thought of mathematics is cruel, and we rejoice in its remoteness. The last thing we should have thought of was a science of mathematics in tune with the Infinite, and the handmaiden of theologies. This romance of knowledge has come to pass. We are told that "Mathematics by the inmost character of her being is specially qualified to assist in the restoration of theology." We can lift up a book entitled *Flatland* and feel the same kind of interest as a boy intent on a story by Zane Grey. We seem to be in a new world such as Euclid never suggested. We read that God "may now be said to be something more than a mere hypothesis, but a real being whose reality is an immediate object of genuine knowledge, not only such a knowledge as the mystic asseverates, but a kind of certitude." In sober earnest we are told that the words Infinite, Eternal, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, are not unreal terms; that they are not merely voices sounding from the deeps of religious feeling, but in the terms of modern mathematics they are definable "sharply as concepts."

When the modern mathematician joins with the ancient prophets in the litany, only the dull and the

stupid will remain ungrateful ! It might be a little difficult for some of us to join in a mathematical anthem, but we might be allowed to listen while "exact thought" expresses itself. Our way of realizing God follows a much more humble instinct of the soul, and we can only stand still and listen to mathematicians in their cathedral of Euclid chant of

"Times unending, comprehending,  
Space and worlds of worlds transcending."

The reality and immanence of God fill our souls with a more simple and intimate personal realization ; we find our kinship with an ancient night-watcher of the hills : " When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou dost visit him ? O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ! "

As I write concerning the knowledge of modern men, I look from my study window on one of the fairest scenes of earth. It is a June day. Away to the south-west the peaks of Arran are grey and distant, but sharp and clear. The shadows of driving light flash and reflash across the Cowal hills. The widening stretches of the Clyde are a mirror kissed with laughter, and the Kyles of Bute stretch straight out before me to the far distance of Argyle. Only a profane imagination could contemplate this and leave the living God out of the picture. Every science of the things that are sharpens the reality. The mind has not to guard itself against the thought of God.



Its danger is to be lost in a kind of general and indefinite sense of God. The litany of nature is not personal enough to give the realized sense of the immanent God in the soul. The All-soul is not definite enough for MY soul. The frontiers of knowledge may enlarge like an enchanter's palace. The regions of thought may become like the cloud mountains of a summer day.

The human mind and conscience is not satisfied with nature worship or the *All-soul* of a pantheistic ecstasy. The heart of man merged in a mere nature sympathy may still be empty of the love and righteousness that are the secret of the personal possession of the living, personal God. The personal soul of man asserts itself, if need be, over against the Universe. All nature sings a litany to God, and man has his part in that general song; but the reality of religion—the personal realization of the personal God—is something more intimate and definite than the chant of the All-soul. To sing:

“I have found the flame of my being in the morn's ambrosial breath.

I lose my life for a season, I lose it beyond recall,

But I find it renewed and rekindled in the life of the One—the All,”

is the song of a summer day, but it is not the litany that completes the soul-song of human effort, comfort and desire. The divine life in the personal spirit of man is something deeper than the song of the secret of nature. Nature is but a universal revelation of the power and beauty of God. The heart of man sings of His holiness, righteousness and love. I am hidden in the cleft of the rock, to behold more than the sweep and rustle of God's garments. His glory

that passes before mine eyes is the moral and spiritual grandeur of His inner life pulsing in my own soul, and creating a song at the centre of my personal experience in relation to my conscience and my will.

There is a type of modern thinking that gets lost in itself, and in the process loses God. To define God in terms of the Universe is to leave Him undefined. If any one will say, "The Universe is an Infinite Self, and that Self we call God," he speaks nonsense, giving personality to the universe and merging God in His own handiwork. This style of talk is the type of thinking that neither exact science nor modern psychology will tolerate. To discuss the immanence of God in such a way as to make the sense of personality intangible is futile. The sense of the sublime, the appreciation of art, the thrill of music, the runes of poetry, are not in themselves religion, nor are they a substitute for religion. The colour on an insect's wing, the shadows on the heather, the lift of the hill-sides, the concave of the sky and the sound of many waters, are parts of a divine litany, and man joins in that song; but the religion of a man's soul is a personal relation to a personal God which exists in direct moral and spiritual communion. It is not maintained through a union with the "stuff that things are made of," and it will continue when the universe of things has perished. Union with God and not kinship with nature is the personal love relationship of the heart and will. Its reality lies in a valid will that places God transcendent and sovereign in the heart. His immanence is not a substitute for transcendence; it is a result of it. My soul says MY God.

The God in which men live and move and have their being is the God of a personal relationship as intimate as love and as near as the reality of thought and life. "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." The Reality of Jesus preserves men from confounding God with His Universe, and gives that personal revelation of the divine Fatherhood in which the heart of man can rest and find the unity of thought and life. The litany of all creation has a grace all its own.

" The blossomed apple-tree  
Among its flowery tufts, on every spray  
Offers the wandering bee  
A fragrant chapel for his matin lay."

This reverence runs through all the universe of things, and my heart is glad in a universal song. A deeper personal harmony belongs to the discovery of my personal spirit. I learn to sing the greater litany of the love of God,

" With harmonies too fine for mortal ear."

"As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God." This God is the God of my personal experience, and "I will sing unto the God of my life."

A modern writer tells us how, in the midst of the Laplanders' village, suddenly a young reindeer will raise his broad muzzle to the north wind, and he will gaze out at the limitless distance while a man may count a hundred. The next day a dozen of the herd will look up, sniffing the breeze. Then the Laps will nod to one another and the camp will grow daily more

unquiet. At last in the northern twilight the great herd will begin to move. The impulse is simultaneous and irresistible. They move slowly at first, then presently the slow step becomes a trot, the trot passes into a gallop, and the gallop into a breakneck race: the herd is off to drink of the Polar Sea—swifter and swifter the terrible herd rushes onward, careless of food, reckless of barriers, forgetful of everything but the salt waters ahead. The deer must drink of that water or perish. Neither man nor beast dare stand between him and his goal. His path is arrow-like to reach the water of life. He drinks or dies. "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God."

It would be incredible that God should speak in terms of the Universe, and remain silent concerning the unveiling of the Personal Life in terms of human experience. The nature and supremacy of the personal life of man demands the revelation of the Personal God. The meaning and mystery of life meet in the Reality of Jesus. The song of the great litany finds its fullest expression in the song of the personal soul. The revelation is inevitable. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son," and the thrill of the greater litany vibrates in Mary's heart: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: for he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name." We reach the Reality.



## IV

### THE REALITY

THE method of approach to the Reality of Jesus is of importance. In the first instance there is no way of approach but through the record of the Gospels. The effort to evade the Gospels, and to establish a religion on the basis of a theoretic Christ in contrast to the historic Jesus, is futile. Whatever be the problems of the Gospel records, there is no question as to the personality they disclose. None of the Gospels is exactly the same as to the record ; all of them, and each of them taken together, present the same portrait. On all hands we have gossip and discussions and opinions to-day about Jesus. What we require is a first-rate intimacy as to the personality of the historic Jesus. We are persuaded that the apologists for Jesus are too apologetic. The criticism of the Gospels to-day is constructive, not destructive. The time is ripe for believing affirmation concerning the Reality of Jesus. Quiet confidence and a keen enthusiasm concerning Jesus is characteristic of all those who have inquired most about Him and are most competent to speak concerning Him. The critical analysis of the records is all to the good. In these latter days the sources have been sifted. There is no reason for anything but gratitude for the fuller revelation of the

way, the reality and the truth, which the intense and rational examination of the Gospels has made clearer and deeper.

It is manifest that the personality and the reality disclosed in the Gospels is not a time-product in the evolution of the race. Jesus is seen as He is in Himself and by Himself. The attempt to account for Jesus along what is called natural lines has failed. A naturalistic Christ is not the historic Jesus of the Gospels. There is no manner of doubt as to the Figure that passes before our eyes in the four Gospels, or, for that matter, the personality and the reality that fills in and dominates the whole New Testament life.

There is a common suspicion abroad among average men that the recent study of the New Testament literature has in some way reduced the terms in which Jesus is to be viewed. We are concerned in this chapter as to the Reality of the Personality portrayed in the Gospels. For all practical purposes the Personality of Jesus is capable of being more clearly seen and more vitally apprehended to-day than ever. Every inquiry concerning the Gospels confirms the Reality.

Jesus comes upon the stage of history in no uncertain manner. He moves freely in the actual life of Galilee and Judea. We are not here making inquiry concerning some dim period of the world's history and youth. We do not move among the myths and legends and folklore of man's emerging thought or yearning imagination. This thing was not done in a corner. Jesus arrives at a well-defined period, and at a time open to clear investigation both as to fact

and event. Every new knowledge of to-day throws light on the historic period "in the days of Herod," and "when the decree went out from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled." The time when Quirinius was governor of Syria is an open book. From Bethlehem to Olivet, Jesus is a clear and well-defined personality.

Our navy experts have a saying which describes a day as one of "good visibility" or otherwise. The day of Jesus was a day of "good visibility." The Gospel records present us with a definite figure, moving amid well-ascertained events. Two things are distinctly conveyed. We have the impression Jesus made on those most intimate with Him, and we have also the disclosure of the *inner consciousness of Jesus Himself*.

The records convey a united and unanimous conviction as to what men believed concerning a reality which their eyes had seen and their hands handled. The records are fragmentary and varied, but there is no lack of clearness as to the impression Jesus made on the minds of men, or of the interpretation placed upon the revelation of His personality. The Gospels did not create Jesus. Jesus in actual history and experience created them.

Whatever be the limits as to the human presentation of the facts, there is no indefiniteness as to the reality and personality disclosed. The Reality of Jesus as the Reality of God in human life and experience can neither be evaded nor explained away. It avails nothing to traffic in words. Modern men have an increasingly intelligent idea of the words natural and supernatural. He would be a bold natural

scientist to-day who would limit the meaning of the word natural ; he would be a bolder theologian who would lay the boundary on a definite line between what is termed natural and supernatural. To account for Jesus on what is commonly termed natural lines is impossible. One theory scarcely waits upon another for its final collapse. The Reality of Jesus survives every theory concerning Him.

That He was the Reality of God for men is forced to the surface of every one of the Gospels. The record is the attempt to put in narrative the experience of Jesus in the hearts, minds and imaginations of the first disciples. The fact disclosed is put in various ways, and the writer of the Fourth Gospel (whatever room there may be for discussion as to who he was) says nothing more than what the other Gospels record. Jesus is and was the Word, the expressed reality of God. All the Gospels rejoice in the same fact, whatever the form of expression may be. Jesus historically is thus expressed : "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us : and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is undoubtedly the reality and personality of all the Gospels, and the witness to this is the unanimous witness of all the first disciples of Jesus. It was this Personality and the consciousness of the fact of the Reality of God in Jesus that became the saving and rejoicing element in every life of the faith and experience of Jesus.

It may, however, be said, and said quite reasonably and believingly, that the first disciples can only give the record of their own impression and belief, and that this impression may not be a fact for others. It was



a remark of Augustine in his day concerning his opponents that they said "that the disciples attributed to their Master more than the Reality." One needs to be clear as to what a reference like this means. It is lawful to ask, What is the impression that others have concerning Jesus that has any claim to reality? Jesus creates the same impression in human hearts to-day as He created in human minds and consciences in Galilee and Judea. The historic Jesus is the living Christ, and the living Christ was the historic Jesus.

The Gospels record, therefore, more than the impressions of first disciples. They express the saving experience of the human heart and will in relation to the Reality of God. The thrill in the heart of the first disciples is born of the same experience that possesses the saving sense of Jesus at all times. Jesus finds men, and men in Jesus find the Reality of the personal God. Any other experience is not the reality of the Christian experience.

When we inquire closely, we find that the first experience is none other than the universal experience in a variety of form. This brings us to the fuller realization of the reality disclosed in the self-consciousness of Jesus Himself. The Gospels reveal Jesus in the setting of the expectation of the race. The hope of Jesus, the expectation of the Reality of God to be revealed, is part of the race's life and thought. Jesus is the fulfilment of the hope and expectation of man. The reality of Jesus is the visibility at the core of human expectation and fulfilment. The sense of expectation and fulfilment is part of the warp and woof of the Gospel record, and its significance cannot be under-

estimated. One of the most penetrating modern thinkers has put this matter thus. He has written : "God's manifestations are not sudden ; outposts and skirmishes precede the array of the Lord of Hosts. No great creative act is isolated ; it is typified ; it projects dim shapes of itself ; it realizes itself in a lower form ; it struggles toward complete embodiment, rising through hindrances into imperfect forms till it reaches perfection." The first experience of the disciples is bound up with this realization of the discovery of the reality to come.

Its inward witness to the reality is completed not merely in the experience of first disciples, but in the disclosure of the self-witness of Jesus to Himself.

Jesus Himself recognized Himself as the Messiah. It is the Messianic consciousness of Jesus which lies at the core of the record of the Gospels which gives final witness to the reality. Jesus is not merely an "idea" or an "ideal" which has the value of God. He is the personal fact of God in terms of human experience. He was conscious of Himself as the Reality of God. His "ideal" and "teaching" does not constitute the Gospel. The Gospel is constituted in His Personality. "He did not," confesses Renan, "preach His opinions, He preached Himself." It is Who He was and what He did that gives Reality to Jesus. "Learn of *me*." "Come unto *me*." "I am the Way, the Reality and the Life." No lawful interpretation of the record of the Gospels can or desires to escape from this reality.

No contemporary doubted what this claim of the historic Jesus implied.

When Jesus came finally to trial at the hands of

His own nation, He was sent to death on this self-witness and on this claim. The Reality of Jesus is His reality as the disclosure of the divine Fatherhood. This reality is not merely an enriched form of teaching concerning the nature and the love of God. Jesus has reality for men, first and last, not merely as proclaiming the divine Fatherhood, but as living it. It was the way in which He lived the Fatherhood that the Reality of God was made manifest. It is this personality and action which gives its inmost quality to the Gospel, and which creates the experience of the Reality of God in human hearts.

In these last days the way of man's soul has been "strewn with the images of broken gods," but the way of the human heart and conscience still bears witness to the reality in the historic Jesus and the living Christ. The Reality of God abides in the experience of men. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," is still the response of receptive hearts. It is the intuitive response of the redeemed heart. The Reality of Jesus lives and continues in the experience of the soul. "Beware," says good Samuel Rutherford, with his quaint and sensitive instinct for reality—"beware to go to bed and sleep with a bone broken or disjointed in the inner man. It is good to be disquieted in spirit as if there were an aching in the bones; when Peter, by denying his Lord, had rotted a bone or joint of the new man in himself, he rested not well that night." We shall see how the Reality verifies itself as we proceed. The proof of the Gospel is to go forward on it. Jesus verifies Himself *to* men and *in* men.

## V

### THE HOMELESS HEART

It is an essential part of the self-revelation of Jesus that He manifests a new type of real life. Before coming to the intensity of the revelation of God in the concentration of the passion of Jesus it is part of a clear type of thinking to dwell on the inward revelation that is evident in the solitary grandeur of the personality of Jesus. There is no vagueness in the self-revelation of the inner soul of Jesus. It is of special value to consider this side of His Reality in view of our further studies in the Religion of Jesus and how Jesus concerns men to-day.

There is nothing in Jesus that betrays any artificial apartness from real life. The "secret, cherished, perilous thing" that men call life was really lived by Jesus. He carried Himself amid the "traffic of affairs."

While this is manifestly an essential thing in any view of reality, it is also clear that Jesus never lost Himself in the things "that now are." He lived the common life but He also manifested the mastery of things.

The Homeless Heart of Jesus is the revelation of the divine standards of value. Amid the show of things Jesus manifests the "sedulous flowering" of the deeper and inner spirit that belongs to man's command



of everything outward in the circumstances and conditions of living. Jesus lived the life of men in a definite attitude of mind and a superior temper of spirit. His inwardness of heart and will was not merely part of the revelation of the Reality of God ; it was part of the divine revelation of the Reality of Life.

To live the divine Fatherhood was to disclose human affairs for every man in a fixed personal relationship with God. Men saw in Jesus with an increasing wonder the depth of the meaning of life. They saw in Jesus the setting of life and its goal. They came to understand that there could be no deeper revelation of the Reality of God than life as Jesus lived it. In after days they came to see that no greater name for God could be imagined than that God was " the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The intimate God in personal human relationship thus became the God of men's heart, thought and endeavour.

Men watched this divine movement in the divine Fatherhood until the thought of it became the most cherished ideal of their souls. The Homeless Heart of Jesus became an unveiling of the Eternal Heart of God. The revelation transforms the ideal of life. Nothing human is alien to it. From the cup at the wedding feast to the kiss on a child's cheek, from the world's market to the chamber of death, the course of life is realized in the Reality of God.\*

A modern writer thus gives expression to that inwardness of life's ideal that the solitary grandeur of the soul of Jesus makes real amid the palpitating pulse of life in all its daily experience. " Then came the triumphant belief, weak at first but taking slow shape,

that the attitude of the soul to its Maker can be something more than a distant reverence, an overpowering awe, a humble worship ; the belief, the certainty that it can be a personal link—that we indeed hold converse with God, speak with Him, call upon Him, only desiring to be led according to His will.”

The intensity of the life of Jesus was seen by men. They were drawn on to understand the inwardness of its sacred energy, and there entered into their conviction that Jesus not only revealed an ideal of life but that He expressed life in terms of the Reality of Love and of God. In the final issue and amid the action of culminating events they were able to penetrate the outward and to realize the inwardness of the Presence in the unveiling of Jesus.

“ And each victor passing wanly  
Gazes on that Presence lonely  
With unmoving eyes, where only  
Grow the dreams for which men die,  
Grow the dreams the far ethereal  
That on earth assume material  
Attributes.”

The Homeless Heart is part of the essential ideal and action of life. The inwardness of the soul is the energy of the Secret of God.

There is nothing more illuminating in the Gospels than the impression of the inwardness of Jesus, and it was a supreme something that no human ingenuity could have invented. The table-talk of Jesus, His seemingly casual utterances, His wayside conversations, were disclosures of a startling kind. The personality of Jesus is revealed thus, in a way that there is no evading. Windows are discovered revealing the

soul of Jesus and throwing a searchlight on the reality of life, and of the heart in God.

One illustration must suffice. The scene is set in the uplands of Samaria. Through the woodland ways Jesus and His disciples are passing from hamlet to hamlet. A few scattered folk follow the Master and His friends. Some follow with a wistful yearning ; some merely out of idle curiosity ; some with secret and watchful hostility. On the surface of things, there appears to be nothing in the issue but the lingering saunter of a dreamer and His intimates amid the villages of Samaria. There is no suggestion of transcendent personality, no forcing of attention in the attitude or manner of Jesus.

Nevertheless, that woodland holds in its secret the life-and-death issues of history, the destiny of humanity, and the revelation of the life divine. History was passing unconsciously into a New Age, and the Reality of God was walking on the green swaths of Samaria and through the woods and up the irregular pathways that make the short-cuts to the habitations of men. There is a remote sense of distance from their Master in the hearts of the disciples ; there is a tense look on the face of that Leader and a something in His eye and footstep that presages determination and doom. It is the spring of the year and the birds are busy nest-building, and here and there a fox has started from the undergrowth. Nature is alive and men are tense and waiting. Suddenly, " as they went their way a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

It is startling. It is penetrating. It is the Reality of Jesus. It had perhaps been well not to have broken in on that woodland reverie with the impulse of a question that counted not the cost. There is menace and abrupt apartness in the reply to a superficial quest that knew not the inwardness of hearts that travel "up the difficult dark places, joy and anguish in their faces."

There is an incurable stupidity on the surface of life, and in the impulsive questions of even the well-intentioned who see not to the core of things. What is this answer on that woodland way to the quest of reality and life? What is this breaking forth of speech—this utterance of the Homeless Heart—to show the inwardness and soul of things? It cannot be that Jesus felt homeless in the sense of the external conditions of life or of a personal shelter beneath the roof-tree of love and home. For years He had known a home-life made happy by ideal motherhood and by the shared responsibilities of care and toil. He had carried the burden of the common day in terms of "The Carpenter's Son." In circumstances of the people's life He had lived with neither poverty nor wealth in the healthy independence of the day's toil for the day's bread (I suppose that is a window into His soul when He prays, "Give us each day our daily bread"). He had known the fellowship of labour, and the common joy of neighbours' talk, and the home-coming at the eventide.

It is not without significance that the Reality of Jesus is thus identified with the "common life," and that the divine manhood was thus exercised and made manifest in the highlands of Galilee and not in an



industrial city. The reality is a plain rebuke to the artificialities of modern living. It plucks the mask from off the face of society and leaves to view the corrupt, unhealthy nakedness of the modern "show of things." No door was closed for Jesus on the shelter and simplicity of real happy living. The door to life's love and intimacies was always open to Him, and He was no ascetic, cynic nor neurotic, to scorn the common joy of life. "I paused before the cabin door and saw the King of kings at play."

The secret of the "Homeless Heart" was deeper far than this. It penetrated to the inwardness of life's reality and the outreach of the soul of things. Jesus not only looked at life: He saw through it, and His mission was to give it the divine intention and its spiritual realization. In His vision of the standard of values, He saw men missing the reality and the goal of life. Life meant the chance of God, the fulfilments of the heart, and the satisfactions of the soul. He that would follow Him had no other goal than that—He came not merely to declare the Reality of God but to live the Fatherhood. This was the inwardness of man's necessity and the meaning which Jesus gave to life.

Without this, the heart was empty, and Jesus found Himself homeless in a world where the spiritual view of things was rejected and sin and self enthroned. The world of men was blind, and the things by which men really live were the sneer of the market-place and the scorn of hearts set on their own ends with a pitiable and cruel faith in the lower and external forces of life. The Fatherhood of God was not in the world, and where the Father was not the Son could not find a

home. It was the homelessness of heart and mind and spirit—the way of the solitary in an alien land. Men had neither eyes nor ears for the reality of life. The door was shut on Jesus, and the Reality of God seemed a mockery and a scorn. It was the pathos and the tragedy of the despised and rejected of men. He offered men the complete life, and the door was shut. With a wistful longing He would have unmasked the unreality of life around Him and the falsehood of a world that made a god of its own externals, until the overtones of His soul fell from His lips like a lament for the dead: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man will hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.” “If any man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Nevertheless,

“Among the stammering sophists of the age  
Christ’s words are absolute and His vision clear.”

At the core of life lies the secret of the homeless heart, and the life of the Fatherhood is hidden from men until the heart that has spent all is quickened to a new and lustrous fidelity and the surprise awakening of the soul comes with the longing cry for the Reality of God and the homecoming of the heart. “I will arise and go unto my Father.” “I am in the world but not of it.” The secret of the homeless heart discovering life in its divine reality is the secret of the thought and yearning of Jesus. Jesus would reveal the inwardness of things.

It fills the mind with sadness to see the way of solitary love. It fills the heart with a subdued longing

for the reality of life to behold Jesus moving to the goal of life amid the wayward and blind children of men. All great hearts that get the vision of the reality of life from Jesus are in their own measure so compassed in the earth. The Homeless Heart is a part of the Reality of God for all souls. When we speak of Jesus or of ourselves as being at home in the world, speaking its language, doing its work, sharing its experience, we are only after all giving life the significance of the woodland and the dale, of the birds of the air and of the foxes of the earth. The reality of life is in us and ahead of us. The Home of the Heart is God, and the Reality of Jesus is true to life.

When the solitary grandeur of His homeless mind and heart reveals and lives the divine Fatherhood, we see the inwardness of personality. On our human side personality reveals hidden and terrible recesses—mysterious, unfamiliar and irresistible forces. When we mark the inwardness of Jesus a new world stirs within us. A flash from the innermost life of the personal God touches our souls. We are struck to a humble amazement mingled with fear. The intensity and inwardness of the soul-life in some measure reaches the secret of our being, and the longing for the Reality of God is kindled in the conscience and the heart. The splendour of Jesus looked out on life through the soul-eye of a Homeless Heart. We stand in awe before a soul hidden in God, to whom no love or duty of our common life is alien, and we begin to understand why He said, “Come unto *me*.”

## VI

### THE CRY AND THE CUP

THE Reality of Jesus finds its focus at a definite point in history. The revelation of God in human experience reached a crisis point. When the point was reached, it seemed incredible to the men contemporary with Jesus, and it seems incredible to-day. Approached from the oncoming side, belief seems impossible ; looking back, with the subsequent proof of events, nothing but belief is reasonably possible. It has been said that " a man may have the intellect of a sceptic and the heart of a mystic." It is certain that something akin to this resides in the mind and heart of every man who comes to the crisis point in the manifestation of Jesus. It is the average man, seeking the fact disclosed in Jesus, to whom this chapter is addressed. A great mind will find conviction easier in presence of some supreme revelation than minds of lesser vision and grip. A clear mind will lay hold on facts with exact precision, with refinement of perception, with spiritual imagination and with religious emotion, with the sense of wonder and awe that comprehends the Reality of God.

If a grammar of assent is the appeal to refined response to supreme revelations, then there are two great lines along which appeal as to the Reality of



Jesus must be made. One is the line of human endeavour revealed in the study of comparative religions, and the other is the honest study of the Gospels, with the light of future history and the experience of men as to who the Figure was who moved amid the events, especially the culminating events, that the Gospels record. In the realization of the Reality of Jesus we move forward to the focus point, where rays of revelation concentrate and burn. At the crisis point of the "Cry and the Cup," conviction does not fail us as we bow our head in homage with a glad consent of mind and heart.

Our grammar of assent lies first along the line of what the study of comparative religions reveals. It is nothing less than the long story of man's endeavour after God, the revelation in varied form that man has felt his need of God, that he has sought God, sometimes in darkness, sometimes in light, but constantly on the long, long trail of desire and hope. The story reaches us in varied form of event, ritual and symbol. It is the story of man's soul, his consciousness, that he cannot realize himself without God. It is a wistful story, this record of the "Cry and the Cup."

The romance of a universal quest, the revelation that the idea of God has been the lure of the race, and that the realized thought of God has been the driving energy of purposes, and that the attainment in progress has always been conditioned by the measure of clearness by which the Reality of God has been apprehended and realized. Explain it as we may, the progressive idea of God has been the permanent factor at the core of man's history and at the heart of

his life. When man emerges, he writes the story of his soul in Rock-Paintings and in those mysterious signs of the Cup and the Circle which have been the symbol of his thirst and of his effort to express himself, not in terms of Time—a line—but in terms of Eternity—a circle. This heraldry of the spirit inscribed in stone and rock is an evidence, not confined to one locality, but universal, of man's first efforts to express himself and the thirst of his spirit. His primitive symbol survives him. His religious symbol is the prophecy of his human effort and hope. In his darkest emergence the Reality of God was his lure. The call of the "Cry and the Cup" was the witness to his soul. In varying and ever-developing thought the ongoing story is the fascinating and arresting record that the modern study of comparative religions reveals.

From the caves of superstition to the temples of illumination the story has at least this value. It is the witness to man's cry for the water of life, for the cup of the spirit and the heart. In the East, that womb of nations, with its long wistful story of man's endeavour after the reality of life, we can quite see how the symbol of the thirst for water should be the symbol of his soul's desire. This symbol holds. When history passes into the line of direct revelation in the story of the Hebrew race and the "One God," the same idea gives expression to the necessity of mind and heart. The Hebrew prophets voice themselves in terms of the "Cry and the Cup": "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without

price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?"

The cry and the cup go together: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and CRY unto her." The cry and the cup are wrought into the very fibre of Israel's thought and hope. The Reality of God in the manifestation of personal life and redemption is the core of that history. Man dwells between two mysteries—God and experience. There are two realities for man—God and himself.

Along two lines, therefore, we reach the focus point—"The Reality of Jesus." Is Jesus, in the actual history of men, the realization for every man of the Water of Life? It seems incredible. It is true. It is the simple reality that overwhelms us.

"He came all so still,  
There his mother was,  
As dew in April  
That falleth on the grass.

Mother and maiden  
Was never none but she,  
Well may such a lady  
Goddess mother be."

These words of the old carol express the romance and the grace of the coming of Jesus, its naturalness and its beauty, its intimate and sweet reality. Romance, however, passes to event and life. The movement passes forward to the challenge and the crisis, to the vital issue of acceptance or rejection: "Now on the last great day of the feast, Jesus stood and CRIED, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

Here is the issue at the spear-point of event. The search for the cup and the anguish cry of appeal have met. Jesus presents Himself, the inevitable and challenging fact, *as the chalice of life*.

The thirst of the soul, the long quest along both lines of history, have converged to the focus and the burning-point. The romance of the coming is caught up into the anguish of decision. The cup and the cry are at the fountain, and the Reality of Jesus is to be gladly seen of men, or to be fatally rejected. It is the agony of the divine crisis. It is history taking place before our eyes. "A man may have the intellect of a sceptic and the heart of a mystic." Whether it be thus or thus, the Reality of Jesus is for his decision :

"The Bridegroom Feast was set and I drew nigh,  
Master of Life, Thy cup has passed me by,  
Eyes of the soul, awake, awake and see,  
Growing within the Ruby Radiant Tree;  
Sharp pain hath wrung the clusters of my Vine,  
My heart is rose-red with its brimmed wine.  
Thou hast new set the Feast and I draw nigh,  
Master of Life, take me, Thy cup am I."

Here is simply a matter of the realization of the truth recorded in the Gospels of that Great Day, the Day of the Feast. Is that slender, solitary Figure in the court of the Temple of the Jews—THE REALITY? It seemed incredible then. It seems incredible now. It is true. The FACT then, even as it is now, was made manifest in an atmosphere of the unbelievable and the unreal. It fought its way amid menace, antagonism and hate. I would I had the pen of a sanctified artist to depict that scene. Perhaps it is best left in the



naked grandeur of its simplicity: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." The words are spoken to a world in miniature.

Here are swarthy faces from beyond the Danube; here are rugged men from the Crimea and beyond the Taurus; here are polished representatives of Greece and Italy and Spain; here is the nobility of culture from Northern Africa; here are highlanders from Galilee; here, close in by the Figure, are priests and scholars after the religious sort; and here are two or three in scattered groups within touch of the Figure, who are His friends and intimates.

The Temple, with its long-standing message of symbol, altar and holy shrine, takes on a new dimension. Voices of thought and feelings of emotion seem to become articulate from its very stones and pillars, the twilight begins to fall, the red glare of sacrifice takes colour in the darkening air, and the chant of the Levites thrills through the hearts of crowded men and women, surging with inquiry, passion, surprise, anger, awe and fear. The challenge of the "Cry and the Cup" dominates the shrine of religion and the hearts of men. Cold, sullen, silent moments pass, and then the Temple court is empty of all, except the Figure, and He too passes soon beyond the shadows, and disappears into the night. "And every man went to his own house, but Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." Is this the end?

Let the "Reality of Jesus" be its own witness, and the subsequent events of actual history their own evidence.

The Reality of God, of history, and of life is not yet finished with men. There is something more here

than the passing of another idealist into the darkness. We are in the midst of things that really happened, and from the happening of which other supreme facts followed. The Reality of Jesus is not to be evaded. The sanctuary of the night for the moment receives Him. Bend low, oh silent sky ; be kind, ye olive trees ; be warm in your kiss, ye cold stars ; be gentle, ye soft winds of the night ; while the Figure that has passed to the Mount of Olives enters into communion with the Father, and makes the eternal appeal of the "Cry and the Cup." History burns at the focus, and the Reality of God is at work in the world. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Jesus is still in action.

"How can I tell it? The thing is sacred, dear.  
Oh, brothers mine, I give you all I can  
And yet I leave you but the husk of it.  
The heart of it I selfish take away."

It seemed incredible then, it seems incredible now, and yet, and yet—it is true. The Cross is in sight and the Reality of Jesus is its own vindication at the bar of history and experience. Its witness is in the accepting heart. Sceptic or mystic, my heart carries within itself the conviction of this reality : a divine reality at the focus point of history. A spiritual intuition as to fact is to be relied on, even although conviction is reached as a victory over doubt and perplexity. When the "Cry and the Cup" meet in a man's own soul he is not deceived in the intuition as to the Reality of Jesus. It is the intimate revelation of God Himself in a man's own spirit and conscience.

The witness of Jesus is alive in innumerable hearts. The greater the mind, the more sensitive is its per-

ception, and the more clear is its intuitive realization. The mind of Pascal was such a mind, and in this he was wont to say: "Am I alone against thirty thousand? Not at all. You may keep on your side the court and the impostors. I have the truth on my side. She is my whole strength; if I lose her, I am lost. Neither accusations nor persecutions will be wanting, but *I have the truth*, and we shall see who shall win the day." Jesus has His own way of dealing with the human heart when He goes to the Mount of Olives. The Reality of Jesus is its own witness when the "Cry and the Cup" meet in the experience of the living soul of man. The Reality of God is its own evidence.

## VII

### THE WORTH OF THE CROSS

THE Reality of Jesus is the Reality of God in terms of personal human experience. It is the Personality and Reality of Jesus which gives the Cross its worth. It has been truly said, "God becomes Saviour by the ethical necessities of His nature." Anything which the mind or heart feels as strained or artificial in the interpretation of the Cross of Jesus so far robs it of reality. It is the worth of the Crucified that transforms the symbol of shame into the sign of redemption. The Cross was a significant token and a religious symbol before ever it became a sign of Christianity.

We find it as the symbol of man himself—his vision of himself in his place and hope—man standing with his arms outstretched. We find it as the symbol of the Universe, suggested from the four quarters of radiation or space. Among the ancient Egyptians it was the sign of life, the key of life, and so of immortality ; and this symbolism passed into the Phœnicians' ritual and into the thought of the whole Semitic world. The sign of the Cross is graven on the vases of Athens ; it is found in the iconography of China and Japan, on the implements of the Ashantis of Africa and of the natives of Paraguay. The ancient Druid cleared the ground for his circle, selected an oak and stripped



it of its limbs, except the two largest, so left as to form a gigantic cross towering in the mystic ring above his cromlech and altar. The cross has been a universal sign of man's pathetic effort to understand himself.

It strikes us, therefore, with surprise that the Early Christians, in spite of the importance they attached to the Cross, refrained from reproducing it as a visible symbol. Towards the end of the third century Christians began to designate Jesus Christ by a monogram composed of the first letters of the dual name, and the Latin Cross appears with representations of Mars and Apollo on certain coins of Constantine.

The crucifix does not make its appearance until the seventh century. The art of the Middle Ages was not slow to heighten its Realism. But, at the same time, a distinction was drawn between the Cross of the Passion, which is accompanied by all the implements of crucifixion, and the Cross of the Resurrection, with which Jesus ascends to heaven. A competent authority tells us that—"The first is painted sometimes green, because it was cut from a tree; sometimes red, because it was stained with the blood of Christ. The second is painted sometimes blue, the colour of the sky; sometimes white, as symbolizing the invisible Divinity. It is this last that is carried at the head of processions. The cross became a hierarchical symbol in the Church. The Pope has the privilege of having carried before him a cross with three bars, while cardinals and archbishops have to be content with two, and bishops with one." All this is interesting, and in the history of vital thought has its instruction. The mind is brought sharply up as to the "Worth of the

Cross." We may be certain of this, that when the Cross becomes the centre of a priest cult, or a mere shibboleth in the mouth of a preacher, it has so far lost its value and has ceased to possess or present the "Reality of Jesus." Something of the same lack of reality may belong to successive theories as to the interpretation of the Death of Jesus. It is a witness to the worth and value of the Cross of Christ that it has survived the efforts of men to explain it. Age after age has sought to present the Cross in terms of its own view of things. There is no earnest mind but will be grateful to the age-long effort of saintly men and noble scholars in their desire to express exactly what the Cross has meant, as a saving and a redeeming fact. We are debtors to all the patience and the piety of the past.

We are equally debtors to the research and exposition of faithful men who have garnered for us the truth that an historic survey of the Christian thought of centuries concerning the Fact of the Cross reveals. Such books as *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, by the late Dr. Denney, and *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology*, by Dr. Rashdall, leave all men of a good heart and of a good intention under a deep debt of gratitude. They show how the "Reality of Jesus" and the "Worth of the Cross" transcend the thoughts of men. It could not be otherwise. There is a secret beyond us in all ultimate facts. The scientist investigates life, yet life transcends his science, even as it kindles in him the fire of a more intense enthusiasm concerning his inquiry. Life is greater than men's theories of life. So is it with the Cross of the Saviour. It is greater than every sanctified

inquiry concerning it. Its witness and reality are the experience of it. This witness the "Worth of the Cross" has in itself. It saves and redeems by its own action. It searches the mind and the conscience. The Cross may be rejected, but it cannot be evaded. It works with the energy of the reality in itself, "to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

The Worth of the Cross is its spiritual power. It is the "Reality of Jesus." The Cross is not a stark fact in isolation. It is not a mystery. It is a revelation. It is a culminating point in the revelation of the person of Christ. It is the Reality of God sounding the depths of human sin and experience. It is the vital expression of God's oneness with men. The life of the divine Fatherhood is an act of eternal sacrifice, and the "Reality of Jesus" is the reproduction of that in time. Jesus did not come into the world merely to die. He dies because He is in the world on God's behalf for men; and if He is to accomplish His purpose, He must accomplish it to the uttermost. He unveils God, but in the same act He opens up man's way to God, and the Worth of the Cross is its finished conquest over sin and death.

The reality in the Cross of Jesus consists in this fact. It not merely gives to men a supreme thought as to the divine love on their behalf, but it shows that love at work, in such wise, as that man has access to the divine love in the region of the conscience and the soul. The Worth of the Cross is the Reality of Jesus conveying love, forgiveness, pardon, penitence and peace. It is an act of God in humanity, sealing salvation to the soul. *Men are conscious of the action.*



They have boldness to enter in by "a new and living way" which Jesus "hath consecrated through the veil, that is, his flesh," and "through him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." As far as words can express the experience, the "Worth of the Cross" can thus be expressed, but the experience itself is greater than all language. The intensity of the experience in the personal soul can be expressed in the words of one of the keenest minds that ever contemplated the "Reality of Jesus" and was led captive by the "Worth of the Cross." "That I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." If words can place the reality, it is thus expressed.

It was a wise saying of Luther, "To abstain from the curious teaching of God's majesty." The stark Reality of Jesus on the Cross carries swiftly its own message to the conscience and the heart that waits to enter the "everlasting mercy" and the "Holiest of All."

"I cannot tell the half of it, yet hear  
What rush of feeling still comes back to me  
From that proud torture hanging on the Cross,  
From that gold rapture of His Heart in mine."

The way to discover the "Worth of the Cross" is to approach it through the "Reality of Jesus" Himself. Amiel has a far-reaching remark in one of his most penetrating meditations. He says: "What we call Christianity is a vast ocean into which flow a number of spiritual currents of distant and various



origin. What is specific in it is Jesus—the religious consciousness of Jesus.” We may well pause on that and see its gift of illumination. Jesus was conscious of Himself and of His mission. He came by no misadventure at the hands of priests and scribes. He undertook His work, and that work was along the line of an “obedience unto the death, even the death of the Cross.” It was no necessity forced upon Him towards the end, a kind of resignation to the inevitable as “the suffering Servant of God.”

It was a memorable day with Him when He came to the Jordan and to John’s baptism. The eye of the Baptist penetrated to the Reality, and of those born of women there had not been a greater than this Forerunner. We say his eye saw the reality, and words of solemn import and of alarming prophecy fell from his firm lips: “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.”

No man may doubt what these words meant to the consciousness of Jesus. His goal was before Him, and His work prepared for Him to a finish. There would befall a later day when minds “slow of heart” would need to be trained to see and know and recognize. “From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples how he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.” Jesus knew both whence He came and whither He went. “Lo, I come to do thy will,” was something that sounded in the soul of Jesus from His first sense of vocation. It was the consciousness of this that carried Him

through, and the permanent inwardness of it is unveiled to us in the weird conversation on the Mount when He talked of the *exit* he would accomplish at Jerusalem. The "Worth of the Cross" is its conscious saviourhood in the mind and consecrated will of Jesus. This was the Reality in His heart before it became the Reality of the Cross. "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. I have my Father's command for this." This is the inner secret of the Reality of Jesus as He moves forward to the inevitable act of redemption. It is the "Worth of the Cross" in the divine intention and action.

It creates no new fact in God, but it does create a new fact in the hearts of men. The world has not outgrown its need of redemption or of the supreme act of salvation.

"Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine  
That lights the pathway but a step ahead."

"Mankind is always progressing but man remains the same," was a remark of Goethe. Perhaps he meant to write a wistful epitaph on the progress of the race, but it may take on a nobler meaning and present a diviner hope and voice the grace that lies within the Reality of Jesus. Man is the same, ever the same—heart needs in sorrow and soul necessities in sin. The "Worth of the Cross" is its saviourhood; its refuge for the conscience and the heart; its recall into life, recovery, righteousness and peace. The soul has still its penitential grief to bury in the heart

of Christ. I cast up here no other reckoning but the climax of the depth and height of God's most precious thoughts — His wisdom and His power. "When Thou, oh, my God," said à Kempis in his day, "wouldst show Thy love to the world Thou gavest it Thy Son, and when Thou wouldst show Thy love to Thy Son Thou gavest Him a Cross."

To-day it is the same salvation for the same necessity, the Reality of Jesus for the life of the world. I know not all that modern thought and modern men portend. This I do know, "man remains the same," in the holy issues of the tone and temper of the heart. The "Worth of the Cross" abides in its essential saving power.

If one were to lead me into a great cathedral tower and point me to a mass of metal suspended out of reach, and bid me sound the note to which that bell was tuned, in one sense I would be powerless: I could not reach it. In another sense, the means was at my hand. I could sound a flute below, note after note, until at the utterance of the right appeal some faint response was murmured; catching the tone responsive, I but need to prolong my note upon the flute until the great bell begins to speak, vibrating in every molecule, and sending its appeal far out athwart the land, responsive to the silver flute note that awoke it to the secret of its sounding life. The deepest thing about that bell, which no hand of mine could reach, was the note to which it was tuned to respond.

So is it with vibrating life in all that makes our modern day of knowledge, effort and the onward march of things; it waits but for the flute note that awakes response, and that silver tone is still discover-

able in the Gospel of the love and life that makes the love of God and lies within the worth and value of the redeeming Cross. The Cross of Jesus saves. It saves through the personality and action of the Crucified



## VIII

### THE FINAL DISCLOSURE

WE have been moving along a definite line of inquiry and meditation. We have not been concerned with speculations with regard to the idea of God. We have sought in the region of nature, history, life and the spirit of man the ground for the conviction and experience of the Reality of God. God to many is only a remote idea, not because of lack of witness, but because of either indifference as to the facts or a certain lazy habit of mind in the pursuit of truth. There is a culpable contentment in leaving matters of supreme import either to specialists or to the vague unknown in the mind of the average man. Even among religious folk there is the way of "leaving things," and a certain pride of self-content in resting in traditions rather than in realities ; and avoiding difficulty by evading supreme issues, in leaving them in the air to await the future. This gives to much that goes by the name of religion the taint of unreality, that is the root of suspicion in modern minds. The thought of God is left as an abstraction or a distant possibility or a remote hope. Whereas, the realization of God as a present working energy constitutes the essence of religion and the supreme fact concerning everyday life.

The effort to get rid of this "slackness" and "indefiniteness" is the urgent duty of every sincere man, whether he names the name of Jesus with the conviction of reality or rejects the Gospel after careful consideration. For ourselves we do not fear the intense and critical study of the Gospels. What we do fear is that they be not inquired into and put to the test of clear and calm reflection. The thing to be feared to-day is not keen inquiry, but that in the absorption in the lesser and grosser interests of life, men leave the consideration of God outside the real things of life and the real interests of their mind. Inquiry as to God is the supreme duty of every man who would realize himself and understand the meaning of life either in its intensity or in its outreach. This inquiry must be free and in the open field of knowledge and of fact. If religion is not real it is nothing, and if life has not its supreme sanction and significance in the experience of God it has not yet attained to that whereunto it was intended. It is nothing other than plain fact to state that man without God is life without reality. The supreme thing for and in man has been missed, and life remains uninterpreted or unrealized.

The Reality of Jesus is a challenge to every man in terms of personal human life, and the final disclosure of the Reality of God is in Jesus, the resurrection and the life. That Jesus suffered death under Pontius Pilate is as well attested a fact as any in history. That He was "raised up" is as certain. There may be various interpretations as to what way or in what form He was so raised up, but there is no reasonable ground on which the fact of the Resurrection

may be doubted. Let any man ask himself the date of last Sunday, and then follow up that simple fact and he will come by discoveries. On a certain date men could state of Jesus that He was dead. Is it thinkable that that was the end? Has Reality perished? It is reverent and open inquiry here that reveals the truth of things both in their proportion and power. The experience of death for any man is not to be reduced to a mere analysis of the dissolution of the body of this flesh. Death for any man is something more than the finish of life under physical and material conditions. Man is conscious of himself. He knows he nourishes something more than a "brute life within the brain." Men are self-conscious; they know themselves as in possession of *personality*—thought, memory, will and conscience—so that death is not merely a physical event but a revealing action. Death is a *self-revelation*. It is a great disclosure. Men to-day do not think in terms of eighteenth-century science, or of materialism in its childhood. They think in terms of scientific knowledge along the lines of developed "physics" and modern psychology. The survival of personality after death is scientific fact for to-day. The incredible thing to-day would be that Jesus did not survive physical death.

We must push this disclosure further. The Gospels and the New Testament record a definite type of survival—an identity of work, will and purpose. The records of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus convey the impressions received by men in personal contact with the facts, and of men who were transformed in their own outlook and experience by

the facts, and who gave their after-witness to these facts in a fashion as to truth and reality that cannot be impugned. Their witness has passed into history, and the date of last Sunday is not so simple as it looks. The Resurrection, whatever be the freedom as to its interpretation, has become a part of the permanent and continuous record of daily life. This is saying something more—very much more—than that the resurrection of Jesus has a witness in the religious experience. It is stating that the religious experience has a background of actual events. *The Reality of Jesus in the religious consciousness of men is based on the facts of the experience of Jesus.* It is at the foundation neither idealism nor mysticism. If there is an Easter faith apart from an Easter fact it does not belong to the "Reality of Jesus."

Our Scottish shepherds say, concerning the upper stony tracts of moorland, that the faces of the sheep grow sharp in searching for their food in barren places. To search for the religious experience of the resurrection of Jesus on the basis that the fact of His own experience makes no difference is spiritual ground barren enough to sharpen into the features of death the face of any living soul. The Christian experience of the Risen Life is grounded in the actuality of the resurrection of Jesus Himself. It is not a vital experience otherwise. A spiritual experience is not a guarantee of an historical fact, but the experience of the risen life of Jesus in any soul has its first witness in the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Himself. The interpretation of the experience is another question, but the experience itself does not live and abide in unreality. A man may play the rôle of solicitor,



barrister and judge as to any event recorded in the Gospels, but he cannot create an experience out of nothing. To say that "Humanity outgrows its Jesus and creates new Christs for its new emergencies" is to speak in terms of a vain and, it may be, an insolent imagination. It is simply talking in the air, and vital things have their substance in reality. It was thus with the first disciples, and it is thus in the permanent and continuous experience ever since. The reality disclosed in the resurrection of Jesus is the final disclosure of the Reality of God. This was the weight of the witness of all the first disciples, and it is the foundation of the spiritual experience to-day, and every day, since the Resurrection was first proclaimed.

No man who considers the vital movement of the New Testament can doubt this. Whatever else it may be, the Resurrection is the great disclosure of the mighty power of God in Jesus and in men in living contact with Jesus. It would have been incredible in itself if the personality of Jesus had been "holden of death," but the witness of the New Testament is a testimony, as we have said, of survival of a definite kind. The definiteness of it was the type of life made manifest in Jesus. It was the final disclosure of the dynamic of God. The movement is in the atmosphere of open day. No one can mistake the tremendous nature of the reality because the movement is simple and in the experience of the common life. The truth was all the more real because the wonder of it was in the procession of actual event and in the possession of human minds and hearts. Here, as elsewhere, the consciousness of Jesus gives us the secret to the reality. It was an overtone in His inner spirit always,

this sense of the power of God. His inspiration, His sustaining grace, and His final victory were always before Him in the realization of the Father. The sense of the living power and continuous energy of God was never absent from Him. It carried Him through life and through death to the victory that overcometh the world—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

The visibility of this power became the exaltation of the first disciples, and the reality of it became the dynamic of the Gospel of God in the world. The Gospel proceeds in the Reality of God. The victory over death was the triumph of life. It was made manifest in the Reality of Jesus. We do not move amid illusions when we read: "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." "But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the *Prince of life, whom God raised up* from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

Let any man with good intention and quickened historic imagination turn to the "Acts of the Apostles" and reconstruct the scene on Mars' Hill in the month of August, during the year 51. Let him recall the history of the man who is speaking, and mark his speech culminating in the words, "whereof he hath given proof to all, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Let him remember that the speaker had entered prominently into public life at Jerusalem in the year 30; that he is one of the personalities of history, keen of intellect and trained in faculty; that about the year 33 he became a captive with the whole passion of his

mind and heart and will to the "Reality of Jesus"; that his mind and conscience had fought against this reality with an intense hostility; that he had given years of silence and meditation to the interpretation of this reality to his own soul—before he ventured to proclaim his convictions, and that, when he did begin to give his witness, he planted the seeds in the ground of men's thought, which ripened to the power which placed Jesus of Nazareth above the empire of the Cæsars and created the ideals which give their tone to the hope of modern civilization. Let him reflect on this, and then reconstruct the scene at Athens in the month of August 51, when Paul proclaimed the "Reality of Jesus" and gave meaning to "an altar to the unknown God."

If thought and imagination have power to move men, a realization of this scene on Mars' Hill is adequate. Let us seek to realize what it meant and what it still means to-day. It is one of the culminating points in the history of man's thought and the story of his soul. It is not a revelation in the twilight. It is a challenging point in the history of civilizations. It is a point at which converging lines meet. The shrines on Mars' Hill had more than local significance. They gathered up the evolution of the past and proclaimed the emptiness of the present, and they had no future.

The search after the Reality of God, the pathos of religious culture, the tragedy of philosophy, the witness of poetry, the illumination of art, are all gathered to the issue of an unknown God. The fear and fancy of the human spirit lurked within and played around an empty shrine. Agnosticism and hope mingled in an expiring cry. Pantheism would pass to

theism, and theism to reality. The dramatic declaration of the fact of Jesus is the witness of the reality of life. "Whom therefore ye worship in ignorance declare I unto you. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath destined; whereof he hath given proof unto all, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

The final disclosure of the Reality of God in Jesus is a fact in action. The challenge and the litany have fulfilled themselves. The Reality of Jesus passes into history and the experience of men as a living and victorious religion. It proceeds on the basis of a witness to fact, and it justifies itself in the experience of the souls of men. The Jesus of history is the Christ of experience. The Reality of God takes action in men in terms of the Gospel of Jesus.



# THE RELIGION OF JESUS



## IX

### THE BARRIER

NEITHER fear nor priests have created religion. Life creates religion. It is man in his supremacy who demands religion. At the confines of his knowledge, his heart and spirit seek expression, and the realization of reality. The Religion of Jesus is neither a cult of the priest nor the communism of the "Carpenter." It is the reality of life. It is neither born nor nourished in the cult of the cave. It is the fulness of life in the open. There is a dual movement in life. The impact of the external order of things and the outreach of the inward life meet. There is contact and consciousness. Personality is realized, and both by intuition and reflection religion is reached. This experience may be crude, the search of the soul may be only at an initial stage, but the soul awake is alive, and the supreme interpretation of life is sought. It is this effort that creates religion and the spiritual endeavour in man. Without this endeavour life is unreal, and only reality can satisfy it. It is not a fixed thing, it is a movement, a desire, the expression of a need. It belongs to vitality and is indestructible, and is permanent as an instinct, a desire and an action in the minds and hearts of men.

Religion is the personal consciousness of God and

all that flows from this experience in relation to self and in relation to others. Without it life is vain and unfulfilled. In the first instance it is not a doctrine nor a ritual, but a realization. The doctrine or the ritual is the effort to express the experience, but ultimately the essential expression is life itself. Rites and beliefs come and go, religion and life abide; and where these meet in fulfilment there is reality. Wise men will distinguish between the substance and the form of their beliefs, and the last thing modern men and modern thought will tolerate is unreality in religion, or artificiality in its expression. The reality must stand in relation to life and to life's fulfilment. The first step in the human mind desirous of confirming itself in the sense of the worth of life, is the act of religion. It is the awakening of the whole man to the consciousness of God, duty and destiny. It is personality conscious of itself in its relationships. The presence of God is found to be within and behind all experience. The instinct of religion is a primal fact of human nature. This is perhaps why the late Herbert Spencer wrote towards the end of his Autobiography:

"I have come more and more to look calmly on forms of religious belief to which I had in earlier days a pronounced aversion; religious creeds I have come to regard with a sympathy based on community of need: feeling that dissent from them results from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with a wish that solutions could be found." Here reality speaks with yearning in a man's spirit, and expresses the longing of many. It is to this longing, this instinct, this desire of the heart that the Reality of Jesus presents itself. The religion of Jesus was the consciousness of God



at the highest, and the effort to express that consciousness in terms of human personal life.

Jesus declared and lived the divine Fatherhood in the utmost reach of man's experience. It has been said that "all good men are, at bottom, of the same religion." This may be true. It probably is not, but is, like most generalizations of the same kind, partly true and partly untrue. This, however, can be stated with universal and happy consent, that the man who realizes and fulfils within himself and in relation to others the religion of Jesus, cannot fail to be good, to be recognized as good; and not only good, but the reality of goodness realized. The world outgrows traditions, orthodoxies and beliefs, but it does not outgrow the religion and goodness of Jesus.

We are now prepared to ask a direct question. What is the barrier to goodness? What is the hostile force in exercise against the supremacy of the divine ideal in and for life? It is a first plain fact in the records concerning Jesus, that He was conscious of a something that was a barrier to the right realization of God, and a hostile force active in the hearts of men. The first impression created in a candid and single-minded reading of the Gospels is the impression of the conflict waged by Jesus. From first to last He is engaged in a contest. He is being challenged all along the line. He is challenged in Himself. We have the record in picturesque vividness of His own temptation. It is a revelation of intimate self-revelation on some occasion to the disciples. He had to fight His own battle within Himself, and there is nothing wanting in the unveiling as to the strength of the forces that challenge the soul within itself. The same hostility counters Him in men,

in society, in institutions. Jesus is never off guard. The sword is never in its sheath.

Jesus reveals God, and He unmasks the thing that men call sin—the hostility of the inner heart and will to the divine life. Jesus has illumined (it is part of His reality that He has done it so effectively) the moral evil in the world. He lays a ruthless hand on this hidden and invisible force, in its spring, its working, and in its manifold power. No one doubts the sympathy of Jesus with men. He understands, and because He understands He is constantly on the watch to help and to save. He is in no doubt as to the reality of the force against him and at enmity with God. He never involves the fact with artificial ideas. There is nothing so dangerous as conventional religion or pharisaism in regard to sins. If men make sin where there is no sin, reaction works its own cure; but there is always danger that the reality will be evaded. Sin is not an abstraction to be discussed, it is a reality to be destroyed—a lawlessness to be ended. Jesus does not define sin. He faces the problem of moral evil in the heart without confusion, without speculation, and without retreat. If any one would question Him in terms of abstract theologies or pharisaic distinctions, He passes by the unrealities of such questioning and brings the mind and conscience *sharp up to the barrier*, to God, and to righteousness of life. To engage in artificial distinctions is to waste time in a matter that is urgent.

It was clear to Jesus, and it ought to be clear to us, that ultimate facts, whether in the physical, the intellectual or the spiritual world, elude our definition and require our action. Life is indefinable. God is

indefinable. These things are facts in a living relationship, and *sin is manifest*. Sin therefore demands not speculation but suppression, not discussion but conscience-driven action. Sin may be described as a physical corruption born of the movements of matter ; an intellectual defect because of the limits of education. It may be a blunder against instinct, experience and history, or it may be a regrettable result of the circumstances and conditions of living ; but being there, it was to Jesus behind all law, all custom, all example, all education, all externals, an internal, an intense, an inscrutable fact of the human heart—the persistent barrier to God and to life in God. Jesus leaves us in no doubt. Whether we study His numerous allusions to sin, His practical and experimental handling of sinners, His own personal bearing under temptation, or His own personal ideals of holiness, we are never for a moment in doubt as to the reality in hostility to God. Jesus reveals a pressing and unremitting urgency to deal with the enemy at the sources of life. He brushes aside all artificiality as to religion and practice and gets to the centre—to the will and the heart of a man. “For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings : these are the things that defile the man.” The barrier proceeds from the inmost intention and proceeds to an action of self-will, having its source in human selfishness, and having for its definite purpose antagonism to God. The issue lies between self and God.

Before the eyes of Jesus men grouped themselves into various classes, but ultimately into two, either for self or for God ; and there was no doubt as to the



barrier to religion and life. There was never any confusion as to moral issues or as to the fact that required to be dealt with. The estimates of Jesus very often overthrew conventional ideas, and brought into the light the shams of official religion or traditional custom; but the reality of character was laid bare. Jesus saw men self-centred, blind with the blindness of self-deception in religion itself; others, proud with the pride of a false thought and a false ambition in the domain of righteousness itself; others outcast from the law, from society, and from their own inner sacred self. The barrier is manifest in the habit of the soul, in the lust of desire, and in the denial of conscience. Some are blind *to* sin, some are blind *in* sin, and the hostility to God is fixed. There comes an experience, however, in the Religion of Jesus that discloses the hiding-places of the soul. To say that Jesus cast His whole teaching into the drama of the Prodigal Son, is to say something that is unreal in its sweep and limited in the judgment of experience. The whole truth is scarcely ever found in a smart sentence. Nevertheless the awakening begins in the discovery, "I perish with hunger," and is completed in the cry, "I will arise and go to my Father."

When men have exhausted life to discover only its husks, the soul asserts itself in coming to itself. The modern thought of men rises in rebellion against artificial distinctions of merely conventional religion, but the cry of the soul that knows its own secret is a permanent aspiration of the quickened spirit. The soul knows the strength of the barrier when it stumbles on the dark mountains. It is all to the good that modern men should simplify the issues. It becomes



the more difficult to dodge them or to thin out the convictions of reality and the consecrations of life. Theologies pass, but the conscience abides. The conviction of sin is the first pulse of life on the spiritual way. God is not seen as a proposition, but as a Personal Presence ; and as men muse upon themselves the fire burns until the barrier is consumed. " I had heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," is a true and universal experience of all men who come into the dignity of living.

The experience is just as pointed now as it has ever been. The baseness of life cannot stand before God in a shameless nakedness, neither can it continue in the vain regret of a hopeless despair. Men at the worst spring forward unto God. The way of penitence in the Religion of Jesus is the way of Sonship. It becomes a habit of the heart in the way of a new life, a new impulse, a new desire and a new hope. It is not a morbid seeking, so much as a discovery of life. It is a glad uprising in the soul. It grows out of reality in simplicity and courage and faith.

" I must stop and pray one little prayer ;  
My courage did not falter : now I feel  
My heart beat wavewise and my throat catch breath  
As if I choked ; some horror creeps between  
The spirit of my will and its desire.  
Oh Light ! descend ! My feet move vaguely on  
In this amazing darkness. My brows are bent in prayer.  
I kneel already in the Gates of Dawn,  
And I am come, albeit unaware,  
To the deep sanctuary."

The kiss of welcome is not far off in this holy, sacred, permanent and universal way of the soul. " The

Way " surmounts the barrier. The desire " for solutions " is found in the reality of life. It is well that " solutions " should be discovered, not with a wistful regret at the close of the day, but in the morning of our effort and at the " Gates of the Dawn." By no human ingenuity can modern thought ignore the barrier or evade the issues of life. Personality asserts itself not in unreal emotions nor in the fictions of idealism. It realizes itself in the realities of experience and in the fulness and health of the mind and heart and will. It makes its protest in the quickened conscience and the enlightened mind against the defeat of the soul. It moves in a world of facts, where sin is a reality and God the goal of life. The way of repentance unto life is the only open road to the kingdom of God. The tear-stained way of penitence proclaims the dignity and magnificence of living. There is no new science in this regard. Everything unreal or artificial falls away in face of the naked realities of moral values and spiritual hopes. Life rends the shrine of man at the very centre of things.

The desolations of moral failure must give place to the transformations of spiritual faith and hope. Modern thought may ignore the mosaic pavements that lead to the byways of spiritual speculation. They may refuse to tread the narrow ways of knee-worn stones that make the causeways on which the shadow of the priest is cast. They may pause and hesitate upon the roadway of many uncertainties, both as to duty and desire. There is only one way that can be called the way of life. The world has not outlived its sadness and its sin, its penitential pathway is still its hope. In the " Reality of Jesus "

there is no mistaking the way. The first step in the Religion of Jesus is the essential advance into moral liberty and spiritual freedom. There is no other way by which the soul may live or man's social endeavour find redemption. That step is taken not as a mere impulse of regret but as the permanent reality at the core of reconstruction and recovery. Dreams tinged with idealism do not emancipate the soul nor remake the world. It is the anguish of the spirit that deals with the barrier, that brings redemption.

The experience of the humble and the contrite heart makes the continuous highway to God. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those : the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." "Oh," says wise John Flavel to his day and generation, "oh, let this be a first use, let there be a due proportion between all the parts of your conversation, let there not be here a line and there a blank ; one word of God and two of the world ; now a spiritual rapture and then a fleshly frolic ; this day an advance stride to heaven and tomorrow a slide back again towards hell ; but be you in the fear of the Lord all the day long." The first word to man's soul and the last word to man's progress is the message that can deal effectively with the barrier, and this is but the beginnings of the religion of Jesus with the conscience and the heart. It is the word of a great deliverance—Liberty. "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison door to them that are bound."

## X

### THE LIBERTY

THERE is nothing in which the Reality of Jesus is so apparent than the absence of any artificial or mechanical view of personal freedom. God is a reality, self is a reality, and the relationship between man and God is perfectly natural and free. Religion is the recognition and experience of a personal relationship between man and God, and there can be no reality in this relationship if it is forced. Truth and liberty are two principles without which the heart, mind and will of man cannot live. Freedom is not merely a question of "feeling free." Men are free. If liberty were based on a personal and private illusion, the essence of personality and responsibility would not be man's possession. If personality is not respected in the matter of freedom the constitution of man has ceased to have moral or spiritual significance. When God said, "Let us make man in our own image," He started on a high adventure and He took risks. Whether the method be by evolution, or by something deeper, of which evolution is but the expression, man is constituted in the power of self-determination and in the grace of self-realization in liberty. God respects His supreme creation.

Man comes upon the stage of history as a spiritual



being and a free agent. Free in relation to God, free in relation to himself, free in relation to others. His character, duty and destiny must be worked out in terms of free moral responsibility. There is nothing more real in Jesus than the impression we receive from Him of the liberty of life. The Gospel is first and last an appeal to free men. We shall see that it is far-reaching. The glory of life consists in liberty—the liberty of the sons of God. God's high adventure justifies itself. The story of man's soul is the essence of history and the revelation of personal discovery in truth and liberty. It is a more fascinating story than the record of the structure of material things. The science of the free-self is the supreme science. The story of redemption is the history of liberty. The logic of ideas does not exhaust the reality of life. There is an intuitive sense of personal life. The image of God asserts itself.

Personal responsibility has its root in freedom and in the Reality of God. Spiritual realization and moral activity incur risks, they surmount barriers, they attain slowly and in tears to the perfect, the mature law of liberty. Man is a fellow-worker with God in the liberty of the spirit. How the self operates in relation to freedom has, like most things at the root of life, perplexed philosophers. The fact of self-determination and power of will is man's heritage and responsibility. Whatever the play of forces and motives, the reality is not mechanical. Man acts in himself and for himself both in relation to God and everything else. The witness is within ourselves, and the fact is clearly seen in Jesus. All that Jesus was, is and did on earth, is a revelation of spiritual re-

sponsibility and moral freedom. There is no Fatherhood of God nor sonship of men except on the basis of freedom. The freedom is even more essentially an inward than an outward fact. Man is not essentially free if coercion passes from the outward circumstance to the inward experience.

God deals with men not merely as individuals but as *persons*, and He respects the high adventure of His own image. There is nothing mechanical about the free spirit of Jesus, and the Religion of Jesus operates in man as a free decision and a free service. Man preserves his personal relationship with God in terms of liberty and love, and love can only come into being and continue in freedom.

The point has been illustratively put in this way, and it requires to be seen and insisted upon if religion is to have meaning and reality, and if self-determination is to be realized not merely as a catch-word among moderns but as a moral and spiritual fact. No amount of subtlety can evade reality in the consciousness of self. "A spinning-top kept going by a spring within is just as mechanical a toy as one flogged into motion by a whip without, and has just as little right to distinguish itself from the rest of the mechanical world. Conclusions as to will and free will may not end in a mechanical doctrine of either grace or life."

The divine adventure must be justified amid all risks, and the Religion of Jesus operates in this confidence. Occam's razor may be a useful instrument. We may leave it with the philosophers. They have a friendly delight in the office of shaving each other, and so they come before us every morning clean,

ruddy and refreshing ; but the plain man knows that life is not a problem but a duty, and that freedom in truth and liberty is the only way in which a man can possess character and responsibility and so preserve his integrity of soul. Man knows himself free and he acts on the knowledge that realizes himself. It has been said that the word " self-determination " is charged with dynamite. This may be so. The risks must be taken, but what the modern world needs to realize is this—that to play with explosive material in a childish ignorance is likely to end in destruction. Liberty is not a reality to be played with. It is the region of man's moral activity and the principle of spiritual action. There is no freedom without responsibility, and there is no responsibility without liberty.

The abuse of liberty is not self-determination but destructive self-will. If Personality refuses to be mechanical, and Society demands liberty, and nations seek realization in freedom, it must be in self-realization, not in self-will. Liberty is realized not in lawlessness, but in obedience to the highest inwardness of truth, righteousness and love. This includes the instruction and discipline of self, and so men act under principles, constitutions and institutions. The modern advance is impelled on the inquiry as to the reality in principles and institutions, and only that continues which has lodged in it the truth and righteousness that prevail in freedom. In such a situation the child who plays with explosives is in the way of being hurt.

Deep down in modern thought reality is at work. Amid all confusions reality is being sought. In



nothing is this more apparent than in impulses and seekings with regard to the principles and institutions that concern ultimate things. Religion and the institutions of religion are in the melting-pot. Nothing can abide that is unreal. The core of the matter is reached when lawlessness raises the question of authority. The modern spirit is haunted with the dread and danger of external coercions and institutions that do not possess the inward life that commands a free response. It is clear that, whatever may be the case as to other departments of thought and life, that in the domain of things of the soul, the mind, the heart, the will, a mere external authority without inward sovereignty cannot abide and claim the allegiance of free men.

Mr. J. S. Sargent's picture, "The Synagogue," is a powerful presentation of the truth that lies here. A woman grim, austere, unwomanly, with eyes blindfolded and head bent, with the symbol of the crown falling from it, has in her hands a broken sceptre; she clasps to her breast the tables of the law, and awaits the future without release and without hope. Such is the institutional external religion when life has fled from the inner shrine. A religion of mere external authority cannot survive. Orthodoxies and traditions without life are things from which the crown and sceptre fall. Beauty passes to ruin, clutching the tables of the law to its breast. Law without the authority of life behind and in the law is a spiritual and a moral desolation. Life and truth and freedom pass on and pass it by.

The Reality of Jesus comes not to destroy but to fulfil. It puts life into principles, constitutions and



institutions. It gives creative life and living authority to externals. Jesus emancipates the law and the prophets. The reality is manifest at its source and in its operation. Jesus preserves and re-creates. He imparts a leaven that purifies, preserves and expands. He sows a seed in the ground of human movements and progressive experiences that becomes the harvest of truth and righteousness. He shows how self-realization is reached in living obedience, and self-determination is fulfilled in self-consecration. The paradox of moral life is disclosed in an unforgettable saying, which joins liberty and obedience in a royal unity: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." "I can do nothing of myself; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that hath sent me." "For this cause I sanctify myself."

The final revelation for any man is the knowledge in himself of personality realized in the union of holiness and freedom. In this lies both the life and the authority of religion. It is the self-determination of righteous willing, and it is the starting-point of all reconstructions in the heart and in society, and in the relationships and institutions of men. Without this inwardness nothing external can continue to survive. God's adventure in man and in history is fulfilled in this unity of experience. There is an illuminating scene in the Gospels which brings out amid all confusion and even violence the reality. It is ruthless in its exposure of the self-deception of the heart and the unreality that may lurk in historic institutions. Jesus is engaged in one of His challenging encounters.

Delusions both as to freedom and authority are unmasked. The record is brief, but it unveils both personality and the conditions and circumstances of thinking under which personality acts and reacts. The historic background is clear ; the issue as to freedom is manifest. Jesus is speaking. He says : " I do always the things that are pleasing to the Father. If ye continue in my word, then are ye in reality my disciples, and ye shall know the reality, and the reality shall make you free. They answered unto him, We be Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man : how sayest thou, Ye shall be free ? Jesus answered them, Of Reality ! Of Reality ! I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the slave of sin. And the slave abideth not in the house for ever : but the Son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free in reality."

The Religion of Jesus not merely declares freedom, but the Reality of Jesus imparts liberty. The experience of Jesus makes moral freedom operative in the soul. God's adventure in the heart justifies and fulfils itself. Liberty is realized righteousness, and freedom is self-determined holiness. The divine life is appropriated by man's moral nature under the conditions of man's free action. It includes a decision of will and an order of life in obedience. It is an inward action in which mind and heart and will are caught up in the Reality of God, and in which men realize within themselves the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

No human mind has ever penetrated into the secret of freedom and the transformation of personality in the experience of Jesus more deeply than the Apostle

Paul. The expert in pharisaism knew the freedom of the soul transformed into the bond-slavery of Jesus. The reality of the experience and its bearing on life and relationships pulled Paul's mind to the utmost tension of thought and urged his heart to the glow of its expression and exposition. In Christ! Free! Made Free! The glorious liberty of the sons of God! These are the watchwords of his soul. He felt no limit to the significance and responsibility of this experience of freedom. It emancipated his whole personality. It set him free from the fatal mistake of confusing outward liberty with the inward freedom and energy of consecrated character. It brought into being a new life in relation to all experience. "Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." Ye that are free possess a broad and generous outlook on all action and life. Ye have a gladsome participation in all things, and "happy is that man who condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth." The dynamic of the new brotherhood lies in this responsible self-determination. "For ye are called, my brothers, into freedom, that through love ye might serve one another." It throws open all life to a free and glad consecration. It has "boldness of access" to God Himself. It possesses "all things" with the radiant sense of the absolute possession of those "whose life is hid with Christ in God." False things fall away. Liberty is caught up into love. Man escapes but to obey.

Long ago two talked together in a carpenter's shop. The surge of democracy was all around them. The fires of a revolutionary period burned under the surface of things. Men were looking for a new age. Liberty



was their watchword. Society was diseased at the heart. Tyranny was enthroned. The lusts of life imprisoned men. Religion itself had become a slavery. One of these never forgot this conversation, and others like it, concerning the reality of things, and in after days James, the brother of Jesus, wrote as to the need of a discerning and a penetrating look at this subject of liberty. "Whoso looketh long and deeply at the mature law of liberty and continueth therein, that man shall be happy in his action." We have no need to ask where he learned to look long and deeply at the secret within the heart of things.

As we look deeply into this law of liberty, the twilight of modern thought, the strife of tongues concerning freedom, the debasement of words and the clamour of violence pass into silence. We see that the menace to man's progress and the danger to man's thought is the substitution of self-will for self-realization, of self-assertion for self-determination. The liberty that emancipates societies, civilizations and nations is the freedom born in the consecrated soul. The dynamic of the new future is the life of liberty within the heart which casts aside the hidden and mysterious slaveries that narrow life and destroy character in the lusts of self. Liberty is realized in reverent responsibility. It is not born amid the shoutings of the market-place. It is a thing of the soul passing into the collective life of men and quickened in the spirit that prays "a piteous, fervent prayer against the shame and ill of living." The destinies of modern life lie in the hands of modern men and women whose freedom is born in reverent responsibility, and whose self-determination has been transformed into self-sacrifice and service,



and into the glad exercise of every free gift in the fulfillments of consecrated living. "If the Reality shall make us free, we shall be free indeed."

There is no short-cut for modern life. There never was an age in greater danger of slavery, but the Reality of Jesus preserves men from the rebuke of great words and gives them the denotation and the connotation of life. The divine adventure cannot be frustrated in men. Liberty lives in love and expands in service. It reconstructs the world and redeems the heart in the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. This sacred and expanding thing comes to humanity in the liberty of the Truth. Personality can only realize itself in the complete freedom of the soul. The religion of Jesus brings enfranchisement. Spiritual character is only possible through liberty, and society can only be reconstructed in a free obedience to the highest law, which is Love. Liberty is realized in a supreme constraint, and love is the fulfilling of the law. Herein lies the holy secret of the "mature law of liberty."

## XI

### THE CONSTRAINT

LIFE can only be truly realized in freedom. Liberty is the vital atmosphere of personal or social well-being. There is, however, a deeper question than the atmosphere in which the spiritual life can breathe, and this is the subject that concerns all who would rightly exercise the law of liberty. The self that determines is of more importance than the self-determination. To mistake the emphasis is fatal, and so men are subject to a thousand tyrannies in the name of freedom, and come at last to the worst of all coercions—self-bondage. There must be an inward sovereignty, that is, the *supreme constraint*, a something that is not merely a master-passion but a central energy. When Hamlet offers Guildenstern the instrument he could but make the reply, "This cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill." The skill that can make the harmony of successful moral and spiritual life is the discovery and the practice of the great constraint. There is a deeper word for personality than freedom. The reality of Love is the essence of spiritual responsibility and moral energy. It is strange to think how superficial modern men and movements can be in regard to great words and intense facts.

It seems so familiar and so easy and so agreeable to

write down "God is Love" and "Love is the Greatest Thing in the World." "In its purity seethes all passion ; in its silence resounds all song ; its strength is builded of weakness ; its right is woven of wrong." It is passing strange how men toss words about and in their dilettante way discuss the things of the soul and of religion. They seem like boys on a holiday spending hours dabbling in the stream and filling small tin cans with water-snails and caddises and poking their nets among the debris that lies in the backwater of the pool. If the mind or heart of man has any deep concern for reality, the central constraint of personal life either in God or men is to be approached with reverent and patient meditation, and with the utmost endeavour of every faculty not merely to behold truth, but to accept and obey it. To discover the essence of character and the energy of responsible living is surely something more than dabbling in the pools of sentiment or filling cans with sticklebacks.

The creative secret of moral and spiritual endeavour is the most sacred region of man's inquiry and discovery. The inquiry lies along a sacrificial road, and the discovery is only open to the pure in heart. We say, it is easy to write down "Love is the secret of life" ; but to see clearly what love is, and how it is to be attained to and practised, may well become a *via dolorosa* of the spirit wedded to the glad activity of the reverent mind and heart. Love is of God, and this thing is not attained to by hilarious excursions amid the passing phases of materialism or the holiday byways of the spirit. The commanding constraints of character and the central supremacies of the soul are not so reached. A mind bent on reality will

pause long and wait patiently on such an idea as "God is Love." The thought is entirely new. It does not spring naturally into the mind of man except in the mentality that Jesus has created, consciously or unconsciously, in men. The immanent God in nature discloses no such idea with the sense of conviction. It belongs first and last to the "Reality of Jesus," who sets man in nature's picture with a new background and a new future. Indeed, scientific materialism had declared against the notion as a delusion and a snare; and no study of comparative religion has disclosed a god whose central impulse and continuous activity is love.

No doubt Nature has more to say than to repeat the recurring story of ruthless evolution, of survival under a hundred forms of discord and cruelty. There is intimation in nature of that motherhood that is not self-regarding and which cherishes the type. Great and glorious as the record of earth and sky and sea is, it conveys no conviction higher than the struggle for the survival of life, and the thought of God as love remains a lofty poetical and hopeful imagination, without confirmation or hope of discovery. Men read the thought into nature, but it is the revelation and interpretation of Jesus working consciously or unconsciously in the romance of knowledge and in the minds of men in whom there is the lure of hope that love may after all lie in the reality of things. It is a vain hope quivering in the wistful heart that watches the "weeping and the laughter" wrought by the high gods.

"God is love" is the revelation of the Religion of Jesus. It is something seen in the self-consciousness



of Jesus, and it is seen now ere else. Men who live in the idea should be mindful whence it came. The thought brings them sharp up against the fact of the Reality of Jesus and of the new revelation in His consciousness both of God and men. In arguing something out there is always an "unrestrained fraction," an unknown and unexpected element that brings things to an issue, and the plain truth here is this, that the world by its wisdom knew not God, and it rests with sincere men to say whence any supreme knowledge of God they possess came from. A man may believe in the differential calculus without ever having studied it, and he may live on principles it discloses without knowing whence they are derived; so may men live on the ideas of Jesus without any conscious allegiance to Jesus. They may imbibe sentiments from the current ideals of the civilization into which they were born without any gracious acknowledgment of whence those ideals were derived. Thousands to-day live on the Reality of Jesus without any grateful relation to the author of the best thought within them. The moral and spiritual atmosphere in which they breathe is the creation of the Religion of Jesus, and they are either unconscious of it or disregardful concerning it.

Jesus alone has made manifest the central life of God. Jesus alone has shown the central life of spiritual men. His self-consciousness and His continuous action have disclosed love, not merely as an emotion, but love as an energy of the divine life in God and in men—an energy that becomes the sovereign constraint and which passes out in the fullest freedom to sacrificial life and service. From whatever angle Jesus is seen the

fact is visible, and the fact in Jesus is imparted to those in vital contact with Him. One who was in living contact with Him, and who in himself had a capacity for loving beyond most men, grew and matured in the experience of the Religion of Jesus until desire and longing passed into realization and found expression in a condensed grandeur of human language: "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." It is transcendent. It is reality. It is not mystic emotion. It is the intensity of personal life and personal experience. He had watched the fact in Jesus, a movement in actual life and daily contact with human activity, a contact and an impact of living energy operating from within, always at tension, always motived to a definite end, never relaxed and never faltering, until death itself made visible the life of God in love. This is the fact in Jesus that outlasts criticism. This is the fact in God that redeems the world. This is the fact in men that becomes the supreme constraint.

Amid inexplicable emotions, amid the strain of desire and life, God is love breaks in upon the soul of man with the surprise of the dawn when it flashes on the sea from the recesses of the clouded hills. Everything is in this revelation that is tender and vivid and warm and human, but it is transcendent when the supreme constraint of God lays hold of the human mind and heart and will. It is a firm reality in the responsive heart, and becomes the creative energy of a new life in the soul and carries with it the dynamic power of spiritual recreation and social reconstruction. It is the quality at the centre of life which matters. It is the sovereign constraint within the life that

becomes the recreative force. Man's free unity with God in this energy of love becomes the transforming agent in the mind and will and heart. It recreates men in the enthusiasm of desire and in the holy action of responsive obedience. It is the call of God in the soul, and finds expression in the freely surrendered life. A great soul once expressed it for himself and for all those who have an access to the divine reality : " For the love of Christ constraineth us. Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation : the old things have passed away ; behold, they are become new."

In the energy of love, in the passion of God, a new world is born. If men would become experts in reconstruction, both for the heart and for society, they would withdraw from the mere externals of craftsmanship and concentrate on the realization of a new world in love, divine love, love as Jesus reveals it, and as the Religion of Jesus proclaims it. Constrained from within, consecrated at the centre of thought, purpose and action to the creation of the new and redeeming order of life, there would be no limit to the outreach and healthy fulfilment of modern life. The " scum and foam " of restless agitation, the tumultuous energy in externals, would give place to an inner quietude and a soul realization of reality. The technique of living would be transformed by the vital impulse at the core of character.

The constraint of love would guard the bounds of freedom and liberate the heart of man and the soul of society from the complex externals of false and tyrannous coercions, no less false and no less tyrannous because they are robed in the garments of idealism.



Idealisms without the sacrificial reality of love possess neither the intention nor the action that can redeem, reconstruct or sanctify life. "Herein is love matured, that we may have boldness in the day of discernment; because as Jesus is, so are we in this world. If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen." The world is blind and weary for lack of the constraint and reality of God. Society is at war with itself, because the hearts of those who compose it are empty.

"And then a Voice as sweet and soft as tears,  
But yet of gladness part,  
Thrilled through my inmost heart,  
Which told the secret of the solemn years."

"God is love, and whoso abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." The inner secret is being disclosed to many. The cry is not heard in the street, but the love-life is discerned in the valley.

Mr. Fearing went down from the House Beautiful into the valley "as well as ever I saw any man in my life. I never saw him better in all his pilgrimage than he was in that valley. He would lie down and embrace the ground, and kiss the very flowers that grew in the valley. He would be up every morning by break of day tracing and walking to and fro in this valley." The secret of the divine love is abroad. Amid external schemes, feverish organizations, and a hundred rituals, the divine secret works and the method of Jesus justifies itself, and the Religion of Jesus is true to personal hopes and social ends. Modern thought may not escape the wilderness temptation to be led captive of world forces, but the supreme con-



straint holds. I think it is Henry Ryecroft who acutely remarks: "It is because nations tend to stupidity and baseness, that mankind moves so slowly; it is because individuals have capacity for better things, that it moves at all." Single souls are tracing and walking in the valley, and from these shall come the new impulse of advance amid the debris of creeds, and cults. Amid the wrecks and ruins of social theories, the love of God works, and personal consecration passes into the collective life of the world, renewing and redeeming life and its relationship. The energy of the divine love operates, the generosity of God works, the divine constraint in the single soul becomes the world endeavour.

We live in a New Age wherein much of what is known as religion is bound to perish—forms, organizations, the accumulations of the past, that have gathered round external institutions, creedal statements, and symbolic ritual. The form and fashion of things changes and decays. The dead past buries its dead. The inner reality is a continuous life. In due time it asserts itself, preserving such external expression as is the manifestation of life, adopting new forms to replace what has been outgrown. Jesus was loyal in His day, as every wise man is, to the institutional expression of His race and His religion. He had faith in the inner reality to reconstruct out of its own inherent vitality the external institutions of religion. Concerning the inner life and the constraining love of God, he was never in doubt. His consciousness throbs with the passion of His heart and the mission of His life. He knew God and He knew men. There is a radiant revelation in Jesus of the energy of the love

of God. There is a glad disclosure in Jesus of what man is and what he may become in God. Whatever irk he may have felt as to the inconsistencies and hypocrisies men had gathered round His Father's House, and however dramatic His action may have been in seeking to clear that House of a den of thieves, there was never any hesitation as to the reality of religion and life. He committed Himself to love in God and in men, and He was justified even unto death, and found "the blossom of the bitter Tree more sweet than aught that blows."

The world can never pass this by. The violence that lurks in things, the urge amid the strife, is the world's sad witness to its own necessities. The Religion of Jesus is a heart constraint. "The magnificence of God," says Faber, "is the abiding joy of life; it is an immense joy to belong to God, and to have such a God belonging to us." When the constraint of God meets in the long yearning of the spirit, the mind and will leap to response in the energy of the divine love. Jesus has still His day of conquest in wistful, waiting souls, and His joy is fulfilled in men. The divine passion of the heart of God lays hold on men, and spiritual forces flashing earthwards light up the dark edges of the world.



## XII

### THE VISION

WE have suggested that life is realized in liberty and in the constraints of divine love. If this be so, the religious experience which begins and continues in the vision of God becomes a necessity to any adequate fulfilment of man's responsible and free life. Until some definite splendour of God breaks in convincingly upon the personal experience, life is lived in a twilight of hope or fear or in a personal slavery to the world and "a show of things."

To write for another concerning the vision of God is of all things most difficult. Reverence for the personality of God and respect for the personality of your fellow-men give serious pause to any one who would deal with the most radiant and sacred experience of the human spirit. One has a clear experience for himself, but how will this experience help another soul? The ancient question becomes urgent. "If your soul were in my soul's stead, I could join words together and shake mine head at you," and the prudent man would refrain himself, saying, "Shall vain words have an end?" or "What emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?"

We have no boldness in this matter, except in so far as the "Reality of Jesus" instructs us. The

task were futile, if it were not thrust upon us to seek to be reverently helpful in understanding for ourselves the Religion of Jesus and in seeking to help others to interpret their own experience for themselves. What is clear to oneself may become useful to another, even where the experience of that other transcends one's own. We can only seek to make articulate what must be supreme for any man, the august experience of the vision of God. Eugénie de Guérin in her delightful journal writes thus concerning a day of snow: "I love the snow; to see everything white has something heavenly about it. The mud, the bare earth, offend my eye; they sadden me. To-day I can see only the outline of the roads and the little birds' footprints. Lightly as they touch the earth they leave their little tracks, which form a thousand figures in the snow. 'Tis pretty to watch these tiny red feet tracing them out, like coral pencils." It is like that when writing of the vision of God. We see the outline of the white way of life. "The pure in heart see God." We know what we have experienced ourselves, but to write about it is an inadequate tracing, a coral pencilling of the soul, however tender and simple, that leaves half of the heart unexpressed. God diffuses His grace and beauty everywhere, and each soul must tell its own story to itself and Him.

The experience of the vision of God is more universal than is suspected, and perhaps the experience is not less transcendent or beautiful in humble instances that fall into no category of official religious symbolism or exposition. It is a glimmer of light in the despairing soul in some hour of debasement. It



is a burning-point of condensed glory in the high and refined experience of intense minds and holy aspiring spirits. Wherever it is, it is the glow-point of the free realized personal life. It is the "point of light" in the soul of a Pascal and the "saving hour" in the heart of the far-fetched outcast of society and life. It is the place where the fire burns and the soiled sandals come off the wayworn weary feet that stand on holy ground. It is the magnificence of God in the responsible spirit, when He is seen high and lifted up and His train fills the temple, and the unclean lip receives its cleansing from the altar and the whole life receives its new intention of consecration and its new direction in service.

In this high region of religious experience there is no more essential feeling than the realization of reality. The average man walks amid a vague surprise and an indefinite surmise. Often he thinks the thing too great for him, and seeks escape from it. Multitudes miss their soul opportunity, not through wilful irreverence, but through the haunting sense of unreality in the urgency of the baser life.

Many live with a kind of foretaste of the experience, unable to articulate what they know and feel, and scarce able to interpret themselves to themselves. God haunts them as real, but the experience is indefinite. Men seem afraid of it. They fear to live the life that should be theirs down in the half-lights of this wandering world. They tread "life's tangled maze without life's clue, busy with means, yet heedless of their ends." Men of all sorts and conditions, however, have far more experience of the Reality of God in their personal life than is commonly acknowledged, or if they

do acknowledge it, are unable to give it conscious exposition.

The pathos and the tragedy of the world is the unrealized and unexpressed vision of God that lingers in the hearts and haunts the minds of men. It becomes part of the weird loneliness of life and the indefinite yearning of the soul amid the activities that make the seeming sum of the day's round and the year's accumulated duty. God's witness in man survives the outer interests of life, and at any moment the soul may become awake. It belongs to the "Reality of Jesus" that He recognized this. He was on the look out for the awakened spirit in the most unexpected places, and beheld the outcast and the harlot going into the kingdom of vision even more readily than others who seemed to have the eyes to see and yet lacked the hearts to know. This gave Jesus the nerve to seek the lost, and His religion finds them. It proceeds upon the instinct and the impulse of the spiritual in the most debased circumstances and conditions.

Jesus is the witness to God's hope and trust in men, and the possibility at any moment of the surprise vision of God coming to pass. It does come to pass at the crisis of reality, and men and women discover themselves in the discovery of God.

Sight, however, is not vision. It is the grief of God and it was the daily sorrow of Jesus that men saw but had not vision. Men are blind until sight passes to interpretation and responsibility. The illustration of the artist amid the oxen does not cover the whole ground, but it suggests the problem. There in the meadow lie the oxen, lazy with the sultry heat. They lie amid the rank, luscious grass; the river flows and yet

seems motionless as a mirror ; the sunlight bathes the landscape in light and holds it in the warmth of life. The oxen see it all. They see it with the ox-eye, the synonym of beauty for the organ of sight, but they see it without inward illumination, while the mind of man in the artist transferring the whole scene to canvas is giving to the day and life its soul, its meaning and its interpretation. " So foolish was I, and ignorant : I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee : thou has holden my right hand."

It is this gift of vision, the sight that possesses reality and gives significance to things, that modern men need. They need to see God in the setting of the sultry day of life. " A brutish man knoweth not ; neither doth a fool understand this, when the wicked spring as the grass." In the long tract of a life the hours may be few indeed to many when they are awake, as it were, to that quickened sense that sees reality ; but, when they are alive they see amid the engrossments of life, and with a magnified intelligence behold the meaning of existence, and enter with joy into its interior interpretation. Nearly all are daily aware that they are in a world of spiritual forces, working beyond their ken invisibly, imperceptibly, inaudibly, and that they are in this relationship and yet cut off from it either from lack of attention or through lack of the appropriate instrument in experience which makes it a real world for them. In the history of men's thought and experience this fact encounters us. Action brings reaction—movements bring counter-movements. The readings of history are like the ups and downs of a graph weather-chart, and the striking of the average line only indicates the trend of progress. The modern



craving for the occult is the natural reaction from a period of materialism. An age which reaches a high degree of civilization and yet becomes engrossed in unending toil and the complications of industrial activity may readily become the victim of reactions as to spiritual reality and truth. A nervous susceptibility and a sentimental tendency in matters of religion may well become characteristic of a generation exhausted with work, and a society in which the deepest craving of the mind and heart are not satisfied may run its modes of thought and inquiry in unhealthy channels.

An age starved in its soul may turn for bread to that which satisfieth not, and seek in unrealities the vision of God. Nothing can be more undesirable, or in the end more fatal, than that men should mistake visions concerning themselves for the real vision of God. Absorption in self can never be a true revelation of God. "He can easily soar away into the Infinite, who has embraced it in his own 'Self,'" says Hart. "Religion," says Bowes, "is nothing but the consciousness which the inner self possesses of the creation as a progressive act." This and such-like shows a reactionary trend in modern thought, and its goal is neither satisfying nor real. There are forms of modern mysticism which manifest a movement of the modern consciousness away from God to the world and to self, and they are unhealthy. However men may wish to relate religion to work, to morality or to science, the reality of the vision of God will pass from them, unless there is a firm hold retained on personality and its definite relation to the personal God. A kind of universal higher culture that remains in the air may well take a



quick turn and vanish into darkness—the darkness of a communion with the universe that has no definite meaning for the moral life and no reality of vision for the responsible free personal soul.

There are pensive moments when the mind passes in reverie, and the soul delights in a kind of sacred twilight of emotion, feeling the nearness or the all-comprehending thought of God ; but these are not the real moments of the great adventure of the spirit or of the realization of vivid and compelling action. The real vision of God is an energetic action of the total faculties of personal life, having supreme value in relation to the will and moral well-being. A religion of mere emotion is a danger to the soul, and the vision of God that is nothing more than mystic absorption of the spirit is an abdication of self-respecting personal responsibility.

It may be quite true that modern psychology has much to say of the subliminal self, and that no self of which we can here have knowledge is in reality more than a fragment of a larger self limited in an embodiment that is not so framed as to afford it full manifestation. This is only an attempt to get at the deeper reality and outreach of the personal life. It is the reverse of an indefinite mystic realization that seeks to lose the self in God. The reality of the vision of God ought to increase the distinctness of personal emotion, thought and will, and ought to have an issue in the absolute relation of the soul to life and duty. The Reality of Jesus instructs us to cultivate the living relationship of God in human experience, rather than in the transports of the spirit. Jesus is always in intimate and simple relations to the Father, and in

actual contact with the facts of heart and mind and life.

The moment a man feels religion as a dream, instead of a life contact, he is in danger of mistaking the luxury of a religious experience for the realities of his responsible free soul. The moment an invisible barrier arises between the outer life of actual hard fact and duty and the inner emotion of the spirit, that moment an element of dangerous unreality has intervened within the total energies of the personal life. The vision of God, that ends in a complete abandonment, an absolute detachment and sense of fathomless nothingness, is not healthy, and it certainly is not the religion of Jesus.

Any attempt to graft into modern spiritual life the mysticism of the platonist or the transports of the mediævalist seems to us futile. Whatever value there belongs to the experiences of a Theresa, a Catherine, a Juan de la Cruz, a Francis de Sales, a Vincent de Paul, a Madame Guyon, a Pascal or a Fénelon must be received by us not as a second-hand imitation, but as a vital reality. The Nirvana of a seventeenth-century or a twentieth-century theosophist is not a real vision of God for modern men. It lacks the simplicity, the directness, and the dynamic power in practical life of the Religion of Jesus. What men and women need is not a sense of dissolution in God, but of the Reality of God in personal experience and in ethical service. We are encompassed by too many forms, according to various creeds, of artificial holiness.

There is no possible good in the effort to live up to a manufactured experience of God. God in Jesus is too

real and too vitally in contact with things to make this either possible or desirable for life in sincerity and in truth. Jesus, as the Gospels reveal Him, is never out of touch with God or with life. It is this reality that appeals to us in the effort to make the vision of God a living truth for living men. There is nothing in Jesus that gives the slightest hint of unreality as to the vision of the soul. There is a calm supremacy of the presence of God in His whole life. The vision of God is the nerve of His will and the energy of His action. No one can escape from the reality of it, and every one who contemplates it desires such a reality to be operative in their personal experience. God is seen by us as we see Jesus. The Absolute, the All-Father, the All-Source, is nothing to my personal soul.

God for me is my personal realization of Jesus. My mind, my heart, my will, are in contact with the divine vision and the divine life, just and only as I see it and understand it and feel it in my human personal relationship to Jesus. It may be that my eyes are holden that I should not know Him, but He joins me on the road. He talks with me. My heart is filled with doubts and fears. A restless impatience, a frustrated hope, a preconceived ideal and a hot prejudice fill my soul. A cry of my soul echoes down the wind, "I had hoped! I had hoped!" And then the unknown joins me on the road. Salutation passes to communication. A fire begins to burn within me. History, experience and the "ought" of suffering takes on a new interpretation, and life begins to have a vision, a hope and a realization. The foregleams of reality begin to flash within my



burning heart. At first it is but a thrill. It passes to a longing and an invitation and a gesture, and my eyes are open and I know Him, and He vanishes out of my sight, but *the reality is there*—a tidings of triumph and joy and the victory of life.

The vision of God has reality in Jesus and in duty. His consciousness of God was as simple as life and as searching as the Cross. "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." This calm and sacred assurance of the vision of God overwhelms us. It puts to shame the counterfeits of human imagination, and makes tinsel of our stage draperies of spiritual vision. The soul vision of Jesus required no stage effects. The splendour of His consciousness of God in daily experience was too intense in its vision to tolerate the artificial or the unreal.

The soul that would see God should seek the vision in terms of this simplicity and in the setting of this reality. To see Jesus is the Vision of God for men. God cannot be more than this for the reality of life. The vision is close and tender and intimate. It may ask great skill to know how to hold converse with Jesus, and to know how to retain Jesus may demand the greatest wisdom; but the vision is supreme for every necessity, and at any turn of the road we can lift our aching eyes, unveiled, to see His face. He gives us "without tortured argument" the soul-sight of God—the soul-sight that makes life adequate to the range of the divine intention and radiant with the illumination of the pure in heart.

There is no vision of God that can outshine the "Reality of Jesus" in human hearts, and it is this reality that puts the vision of life to the proof in



the personal realizations of a divine obedience. This is the worth of vision in the reality of life.

" I pray thee be content,  
But leave me here  
With eye unsealed by any proof of thine,  
With eye unsealed to know the Lord is mine."

In the Reality and the Religion of Jesus the vision of God is perfected. Man sees the highest, and in freedom desires to obey it. The sacredness of personality is preserved inviolate both from the Godward and the manward side. Faith can be exercised in integrity, and divine grace received in liberty and in power. There can be no greater vision of God than this for the sons of men—the vision of the Reality of God in Jesus.

## XIII

### THE FAITH

It may be possible to constitute a form of religion without God. It is not possible to realize personal life without faith. Faith has been too much identified with limited forms of thought and feeling. Faith is a principle of personal activity. The cattle upon a thousand hills live by an instinct of trust, the beasts of the field exercise their functions by a principle of dependent and related life. Their instinct is not a conscious faith. The creatures of the field have individual existence but not conscious, self-determining, free, personal life. Faith is a principle belonging to personal realization.

Whenever personality acts faith is a principle of its action. Faith is not rightly described as a faculty or kind of sixth sense. Faith is a principle upon which the total personality acts, both in relation to its inward life and its outward activity. It will be seen then that this is no limited thing to be defined in a kind of bulkhead, departmental fashion. Faith is a universal principle on which vital and responsible personality realizes itself. Personality cannot realize itself apart from the principle of faith. It is a law of personal activity as universal as the law of gravitation in material space. Religious faith has a different objective from

ordinary faith, but the principle does not differ. Considered as an action of the human spirit religious faith is not different in its essential working from faith in any other department of the personal life. The principle is simple, like all other essential laws, and it is a universal law for conscious responsible action. Unhappily, its simplicity as a law is complicated by efforts at definition, with an endless variety of crude and discordant answers.

It is of worth in dealing with such fundamental things as life, not to be involved in limited definitions so much as clear understanding of the thing itself in all its variety and intensity and simplicity of manifestation. Faith is like life. We see it working ; and to see it operative reveals the supremacy and sweep of its energy.

The obscuring of the great principle of faith has given rise to mystical limitations and the recurrent manifestations of debased cults and squalid fervours under the terms of faith. This contributes to things unreal.

Perhaps this is the reason why modern men are conscious of a feeling of suspicion when faith is suggested to them, and are immediately "on guard" if religious faith is pushed upon their attention. They instinctively avoid unreality and superstition. Whereas, if rightly approached, faith is discovered to be an essential principle of life on which men must act in every transaction of personal activity. We see then the largeness and supremacy of the principle and energy of faith. It is an essential of personal living, and in the matter of religion it is sovereign in its working. Even a glance at varied fields of knowledge and

experience makes this evident. The principle of faith is so evident and varied and universal that men have given witness to it in carving out for themselves forms of faith to express faith even in its limitations of outlook. There are all sorts and conditions of faith : sciences of faith, philosophies of faith, theologies of faith, creeds of faith, rituals of faith, cults of faith. The outreach of the principle leaves men often bewildered, so that, acting on faith, they deny faith.

Nothing is so self-evident in life as faith, and yet nothing is oftentimes left more indefinite and remote from conscious and intelligent operation. In nothing are men more artificial and complex than in regard to faith. In nothing was Jesus more real, more simple, more direct, than in the exercise of faith. Jesus realizes personality at the highest, and in everything He committed Himself in body, mind, heart and will to the principle of faith. His total personality functioned in the atmosphere of faith. His thought, His feeling, His action, were carried on in an operating and energizing faith. He had faith in God, faith in Himself, faith in men, faith in the structure of things, faith in life and faith in the goal of life. He never defined faith, but He lived it. He was struck with amazement at men because they failed to realize themselves through lack of faith. He was dumb with astonishment at the powerlessness of men because they would not act on the essential principle of personal activity, and He put before them His wonder at their ineffectiveness in striking words : " If ye had faith, faith even as a grain—a *grain* of mustard seed, there is no limit to your possibilities ; ye could remove mountains ! "



Faith is so great a principle and energy that personality attains its object through the action of faith, even where the objective of faith is inferior. It acts even in superstition. It acts where ignorance makes the object of faith even debased. Faith acts where the soul is concentrated upon a fetish. It acts where the mind is centred even on a false creed. There is limitation in this action and oftentimes degradation, but the point we wish pushed home is—that it acts.

One could illustrate this from the action of thought and will in relation to the body. Among primitive savages faith produces a physiological effect. Faith in a charm, or a drug, or a drink, or an apparition, may cure a disorder. Sick persons have been cured by pagan divinities, and a modern cult has arisen with a blend of faith-healing ideas and Christian impulses, giving an amalgam that is a comfort or a delusion to many. Faith acts, even when the objective is inferior.

One could also illustrate the principle in relation to the conscience. Faith works for many in relation to the conscience and the heart through the symbol of a crucifix. It is a limited symbol, the symbol of the dead Christ; but its very limitation enables many to the better concentrate upon it. The symbol may be inferior, but faith acts to the relief of conscience and the comfort of the heart.

Faith works in the same way for many, if not through an external symbol, such as a crucifix, yet through the imagination and by way of kindled emotion. An earnest, sincere and zealous preacher draws a picture of the dying Saviour, and a symbol invisible is created in the mind; the conscience receives relief, and the heart consolation, and the will strength. Faith works

even when the objective is not the highest, and men and women rejoice in salvation. They find relief, quietude and the sense of security, and revived moral and spiritual power. Faith is so great that it works under a hundred limitations.

During periods of unfettered speculation and intellectual unrest, men have felt the need of truth assertion and fixed points of thought expression. What has been considered accurate and universally valuable has been standardized ; and faith has been required to concentrate upon a creed. This has been considered safe amid the strife of opinion and the fluctuations of the mind. The faith in a creed works, though the objective may be limited to the intellect. To make the objective of faith a body of objective beliefs or formulated creeds, confessions or traditions is undoubtedly inferior ; but faith is so great a principle and so precious an energy, that personality asserts itself even under conditions of intellectual tyranny and in a religion of submission to credal authority.

None of these things, however, are the ideal of the Religion of Jesus. It belongs to the Reality of Jesus to present the objective of faith at the highest, in holiness, truth, love and freedom. Jesus exercised faith in God thus Himself, and His constant labour of mind and heart was to give to men this same objective and its fullest realization in life. There is nothing so final in Jesus as His faith and His manner of exercising it. His religion presents that type of faith and the mode of it as the reality for all men.

This faith is a faith grounded in truth. Personality acts on rational grounds. Faith is not opposed to knowledge. It works by knowledge, and we may be

very certain of this as evident in Jesus, that a faith that is not grounded in truth and reason is no real faith at all. This, however, is very far from saying that religion is founded exclusively in the reason.

Religion, the Religion of Jesus, is rational, but it is not rationalism. It is according to knowledge, but it has its root in more than the reason. Feeling and the heart—the emotion of the soul—bear upon personality. Men have a feeling with regard to judgments of value, and the feeling is to be trusted and acted upon. The emotion of man's spirit concerning God, concerning goodness, concerning rightness, is a true feeling. The emotion asserts the claim and authority of God and goodness, and the personality assents to this feeling, and exercises faith in harmony with the passion of the spirit. Religion is not, therefore, exclusively grounded in feeling: men are not the victims of their spiritual emotions. Feeling regulated by truth and in the vision of the Reality of Jesus becomes a decisive factor in the decision of the will. Belief and trust blend into an authoritative impulse on the moral motive and spiritual impulse of the soul, and the will brought into captivity to God exercises faith and proceeds to put faith to the venture and the proof of obedience. Faith is the impulse of the total soul carried into moral and spiritual activity; and the verification is found in the illumined action. The Reality of Jesus reveals this. The venture of life on faith justifies itself, and so the Religion of Jesus in regard to faith, worthy in its objective and sincere in its action, rests here on solid ground. "This do and thou shalt live." "He that willeth to obey shall know the doctrine."



Faith is the committal of self in fidelity of will to God and to life. It is the personal committal of the whole soul to Jesus Himself. The experience may be worked out in varied terms, according to the religious experience. It may be construed in terms of a soul-consent to the Gospel, a self-committal to the faith of the Gospel as a message to be believed and acted upon, fitting in to the necessities of the mind and heart and confirming the soul in the grace of God being salvation, a realization that comes to pass in union with Jesus and a participation in His life. In this Jesus is the revealer of life unto life, and faith is the principle and energy whereby union in the grace and life of Jesus is maintained, and even a fragment of this faith as a grain of mustard seed opens up the way to the complete possibilities of the soul and to the fullest realization of life and service. *Jesus is the objective of the soul.*

It has been said that "God is used rather than understood." "The religious consciousness caring little who God is but wanting to make use of Him for various ends." Faith lays hold on Jesus, and God is both used and understood to the intelligent saving of the soul. To centre the life in Jesus, and to concentrate upon Him as life in the exercise of faith, is reality. It does not limit the soul to a backward look to Galilee and Judea. Faith is truly exercised in the realization of the facts of the Gospel. Jesus is received and rested upon for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel, but a man's faith is the living relationship to the living Lord. We believe the facts of the Gospel in the revelation of the historic Jesus, and live in union with the ever-present communicated grace



and life of the living Saviour. The objective of our faith is Jesus, the living Lord of the conscience, mind, heart and will. Faith, then, is an overmastering principle and energy. It brings the total self into captivity to the obedience of Christ. "Who looks may find the secret of the skies and healing for life's smart." The fear of living haunts men to-day even more than the fear of death. Men are hurried through life, and encompassed with its pressure. Their greatest need is a faith of quietude and a faith for endeavour—something that will transform moral defeat into spiritual victory and life's failure into life's triumph; something that will give new direction and new vitality and a new happiness to sordid and oppressive spheres of weary and restless activity. Men need faith, and they need the faith of Jesus. Personality awaits impulse, direction, attainment and action.

Jesus is the superior object of faith. He is a savour of life unto life. He puts the hazard of life to the high adventure, and transforms visions and hopes into reality. In Him possibilities become actual. In Him is the power of a creative faith, both as to objective and endeavour. Jesus is "an act that doth communicate," and the communication is the life that is life indeed through faith. He brings the sense of quietude and confidence, and then the power to perform. His faith is a self-committal to God and to His peace, and then the highest and the uttermost of fulfilment and joy. His faith and faith in Him constitute the great adventure, first toward God and then toward life. The deepest in men takes form in Him. Faith finds it proof. We believe in Him, and

behold faith has its fruit. We become like unto that in which we believe. Faith re-creates, and the stirred heart with sudden rapture enters into life, and that life endures. Jesus and the faith of Jesus endows us for the moral tasks and spiritual victories that make life's achievement, and attain the ends of faith. Life ceases to be benumbed and begins to glow because faith acts, and acts at the highest. The springs and motives of action and feeling and willing are transformed. "Would to God," cries Coleridge in a self-revealing moment—"would to God that my faith, that faith which works on the whole man, confirming and conforming, were but in just proportion to my belief, to the full acquiescence of my intellect and the deep consent of my conscience!"

This is the cry of many, and the Religion of Jesus stands over against it with the call to faith, and that enlargement of the soul whereby the energies of God are poured into the soul, transforming the last weakness of life into victorious strength. The cry finds its answer in the place of divine response, the breast of God. Faith carries us there, and so we salute the great Augustine, whose theology possibly we may not accept, but whose heart revelations encourage the soul to the faith that rests in God, and accepts the challenge of life. "Cast yourselves on the breast of God, as on a bed of rest," and then—and then—there is no encounter of life which faith cannot meet—not even a cross. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

## XIV

### THE LIFE

WHEN personality asserts itself over against the universe of things and the realities of experience, self-consciousness makes man aware of himself and the supreme question comes home to the mind and heart. The self, aware of itself, is compelled to answer concerning life. The unreal must be discerned, and the real decided upon. Life cannot be evaded. It may be lost to no profit amid many vain regrets. It may be saved and perfected to an endless fulfilment. It is the urgent desire of Jesus to preserve men from wasted time and lost opportunity. Jesus reveals life and imparts it. He is the way, the reality and the life.

There is nothing more vivid in the record of the Gospels or in the literature of the New Testament than the joyful sense of life. There is always the throb and thrill of life as a new discovery and a new energy in Jesus. Men make the great venture and discover the sovereign vitality. Now there is nothing modern men are more self-conscious about than life. They desire life, and the long patience of knowledge has disclosed a wealth of resources whereby life has been expanded and intensified.

Modern men throw themselves into life with an

aggressive self-assertion that amounts to abandonment. The wealth of modern material resources has intoxicated men with the sense of living. They can surround themselves with comparative luxury. They can immerse themselves in activity and enjoyment; they can climb peaks of Darien without leaving an arm-chair; they can swim the Hellespont as they light a cigarette. I think it is Barbellion who says: "Life pursues me like a fury. Everywhere at all times I am feeling, thinking, hoping, hating, loving, cheering. It is impossible to escape. Even in a graveyard I saw the procession of life. Life is as a ship on an unknown and dangerous commission, but I for my part as a silly shipboy will stand on the ratlines and cheer. I left the churchyard almost hilarious." This is somewhat of the genius of the modern sense of living—a sense of life and vital resources, and the desire to enter into it and drink a full cup.

Of course there are dull people who accept life without question, and there are sordid conditions of work and labour that rob others of any sense of wonderment or desire; but for the majority of people the rage for living is dominant. There is nothing wrong with the high sense of living, if it includes reflection, the realization of responsibility, and a measured judgment as to what shall be the end thereof. The sense of living without the realization of personality or the conservation of character may readily become the doom of a corrupt and resourceful civilization. Men avoid religion because they imagine it will limit and not expand life. It is just here that the Reality of Jesus is instructive and the Religion of Jesus, rightly understood, emancipating and truly enriching. It was the



heart regret of Jesus that men failed to understand. "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Full barns and a fool's finish were a profitless interchange and a ruthless result of a mistaken sense as to the values of life. It will never cease to astonish thoughtful men, who wake up to find themselves in the world and in possession of a body, that life is not satisfied when that body is fed and clothed. The life is more than meat, and the body than raiment. The opportunity of life is just the chance to discover what real living is, and Jesus in actual life is the handsome unveiling of what glad useful living is in the divine ideal and in human verity.

Religion, as Jesus reveals it, is the secret of living. It has been obscured by superstitions and traditions. Religion in its healthy operation has been misrepresented and misunderstood. Men have thought of religion as a life of the shut house instead of the open under the free sky. Men, supposed to represent religion, have been like dormice in bare empty chambers, and at the incoming of light their eyes have blinked and they have scampered into hiding. It is this or something like it that has made modern life irreligious, to its great loss in vitality and joy.

Modern men live furiously, but they are not happy. They are not natural in relation to God, and their soul is starved for want of the life divine. Some one has said that life "has become an abattoir with an unwholesome fascination." A period of scientific materialism has left men struggling without the vision, that by spiritual things do men live. Happily that period is passing and life gives signs of coming into its

own again. There are evidences that the house of life is becoming more illumined, and so modern men, weary but hopeful, are standing to attention with regard to newness of life.

“ At every thought and deed to clear the haze  
Out of our eyes, considering only this,  
Hours of strange triumph, murmurs and glimpses  
Of eternity.”

The world waits for the reality, expansion and gladness of life. It has a desire to be born again. To be born from above and not from beneath. There is a movement in the minds of good-intentioned “ Masters in Israel ” concerning the new birth and the new life. What has been called the “ tank-mind ” is passing away in matters of religion, and interpretations are being sought for the life that is life indeed.

Jesus would put personality in command of life. There is nothing human that is alien to Jesus. Life for Him has essential worth, dignity and freedom. He enjoyed life to the full, and His inmost passion was the service of men. He viewed life as God’s gift, and He would put men in possession of themselves and of the power to live in reality. Faith interprets life in terms of God. God is vitality, and the inwardness of God in a newborn life is the possibility of man to realize himself and to enter into the command and direction of life. For most men, God exists externally and in the main impersonally. Jesus would have Him exist within, and to be vital at the springs of life. He would emancipate life from the tyranny of circumstances and conditions, and give to man’s soul the divine realization of self and spiritual capacity and power. Nothing is alien, but everything has the new glow and the new sense of

fulfilment. Mere living of the earth earthy is not enough : " That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is the new birth of the Spirit that endows life with the victorious sense of entrance into vitality, power and successful sovereignty.

This is the thrill of life in the New Testament, and the sense of wonderful entrance into life that Jesus gives to men. The real significance does not lie in externals, but in the inward possession of the realized self in God and in the divine obedience and service. There are one hundred and thirty-five passages in the New Testament where life is referred to, and only in seven of these is the reference to mere physical life. Life is an endowment in the body, but the reality of life is a thing of the mind, the heart, the will and the activities of the whole man. It becomes clear that life can only, therefore, be completely fulfilled and enjoyed in the spiritual capacities of character and service. A dim consciousness of this haunts the spirit of every man, but the baser existence and the fulness of material things overcomes him. Jesus discerns the unextinguishable spark of real life ; He would quicken it into flame, and the " smoking flax he would not quench." He had an infinite hope in humanity. He never lost hope of it, and His life endeavour was to endow men with life. He would have all men enter into the heritage of life and share in the divine nature, which was theirs by right in conscience, reason, emotion and will.

" If thou wouldst sink deep enough into the human, thou shalt find the divine," says Augustine, and the work of Jesus in the human heart is to re-create man



in his true life. Beyond all question it was this supreme human interest of Jesus, this "dominating devotion to the needs of man, which drew men to Him, attached them passionately to Himself, lifted them out of their baser selves and brought them up into the atmosphere and light of a higher life." So they came to believe in Him and to receive life from Him. Men and women moved out from the underworld and passed into the new region and activity of life. Jesus was able to say that He had "come to seek and to save the lost," and to utter with a victorious certainty the words of the saving and redeeming life, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself."

Man's entrance into this newborn life was the supreme experience of the soul, and Jesus becomes the empowerment to it. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Alien forces were busy to snatch men from Jesus, but He was conscious of the holding power of life, once it was realized and possessed. This life was a present possession, and therefore became an eternal entrance into life, an entrance into the knowledge and love of God that physical death cannot frustrate, and whereby life and incorruption are brought to light in the Gospel.

Jesus thus alters the whole centre of gravity as to what life is, and changes the whole current of human activity into channels of present self-realization and complete future fulfilment. If men will give themselves to living in such wise as that they are immersed in ambitions, accumulations, events and happenings, they are missing the inner recesses of the fact of life.



Life is self-possession of soul in fellowship with God passing through experience and fulfilling duties in the power of an endless life. Events are evangelists, ever proclaiming tidings to the inner soul of life, and the spiritual essence of the reality of life moves forward amid every show of things "to the fulfilment of character and the perennial joy of the life that is hid with Christ in God." This makes the inwardness and the outreach of life. It constitutes the grandeur of human experience and human destiny. It gives the personal life its conscious power as it awaits the occurrences of the day and the momentous issues of the final hour.

Henri Bordeaux tells us concerning modern civilization "that it is ravaged with a terrible disease, the fear of living." In a measure this is true. Godless living must be ever haunted with an inward fear. It fears love. It fears responsibility. It fears the sacrificial life. It fears surprise. It fears collapse. It fears the end not so much because of the future but because of the past and present. It has no security within, and the daily chivalry of heroic faith is a thing unknown to it. There is no accumulated joy in living, and progress in life becomes disillusionment, and the end a naked dispossession. Jesus would transform all that into the energy of a growing spiritual desire, activity and fulfilment—the transformation from a hoarded fear to an emancipated and overflowing love.

"I saw a picture once  
By a great artist: 'twas an old man's head,  
Narrow and evil, with its wrinkled front—  
Eyes closing and cunning, a dull vulpine sight.  
'Twas called a Judas! Wide that painter erred.

Judas had eyes like thine, a candid blue.  
His skin was smooth, his hair a youthful gold;  
Upon his brow shone the white stamp of truth,  
And lips like thine did give the traitor's kiss."

Thus men betray life and pass to hurl back in despair the price of the sale of God in the barter of living. The reality remains with Jesus. "Whosoever shall hoard up his life shall pour it forth in lostness, but whoso shall pour forth his life for my sake shall discover and conserve it." "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The barter of the inner soul of living is the crisis of human experience, and the secret of life is in God. It may be that the languor of modern thought is the yearning for life, and that the hearts of men have reached the new starting-point, and have a wistful desire to see life with the eyes of Jesus. The reality of life is in His gift, and He survives all betrayal. "Surely," says James Frazer of Brae, "I have laid my pipe far short of the fountain, for I am as blind and as dead and as unholy as ever I was." With Thee, O my God, is the fountain of life.

## XV

### THE CULTURE

WE have reached this point in the Reality of God and in the Religion of Jesus, that we see clearly that personality is to be realized in freedom, love, faith and life. It becomes us to give pause to impulse and to thought and to discover to what extent we desire and seek the culture of the soul. If God is to be realized we must be intimate with Him. The secret of a man's soul is his own possession. At the deepest moment and in the innermost heart man confers not with "flesh and blood." Neither can he pass by the life of religion within himself. The culture of the soul cannot be perfected by handing over the conscience, mind and heart to another. The heart may receive instruction and profit by the experiences of another, but a man's spiritual life cannot be maintained at second hand.

Religion, the Religion of Jesus, is the sacred responsibility and the vital experience of the inner heart of each man or woman in and for himself and herself. Religion is the personal experience and knowledge of God. It is the life culture of the inner self on its own free responsibility. "O God, Thou art *my* God," is the core experience of the soul. It is the personal and experimental love and knowledge of God that instructs and educates the spirit of man, and consecrates his

duties, relationships and activities. It is not enough to give oneself to a search after God, or to pick up God at the casual turns of life, or to be captivated by a devout idea, or to be attracted to a system of truth or engaged in an exercise of ritual. God must be the living reality of life and the central love of the personal mind and heart. We pay attention to the thing we love, and wait upon it. It was this intimate, natural and human relationship to God that characterized the inner soul and outward activity of Jesus. Jesus has stripped the religious life from all artificiality. His consciousness of God was simple, intense and constant. He is never strained or unnatural in the divine relationship. It is the artificiality of modes of piety that alienates modern men from the thought and practice of the religious life. They conceive of religion and the intimate knowledge of God as something remote from actual thinking and practical life.

Nothing is more common than to hear men say, "I am not a religious person," and the statement is made with a kind of self-complacency, and perhaps with just a shade of scorn for what in common experience goes by the name of religion. This is the penalty unreality pays by the unnatural presentation of Jesus and the complex artificialities that have come to be identified in the common mind with religion. Jesus emancipated religion and shows us the knowledge of God and the supreme need of life and the culture of the heart in God as the highway to duty and joy. The demand to-day is for a religion of life. The pity is that the misrepresentation of Jesus makes the demand necessary, and that the need should have arisen of clearing the ground for free and healthy minds in



relation to the author and the source of life. Men need and desire the culture of the soul. The restlessness of men, the agitations of society, and violent efforts to attain, are all an evidence of the unsatisfied soul, the fruits of reaction, and the witness to the hope for the future. Things are passing through a stage of experience wherein the concentration on the external conditions of life is a living witness to the inner instinct, working often in blindness and ignorance.

A good intention lies often at the back of disheartening confusions, and more hearts than men wot of are seeking attainment from the drive of the inner soul. A great many old things are passing away, and human movements are carving for themselves new channels for the river of life. That that river has its source in the interior single heart belongs to the necessity of things. It becomes all the more important, then, that a definite concentration on soul culture should be attempted.

The recovery will not usefully be made along the lines of the artificial devotion that may have served past experience, but in harmony with the simplicity and reality of Jesus. That there is a clamant need for the culture of the inner self and for the personal character that is nurtured in the knowledge of God is self-evident. The problem of the hour is the disproportion between intellectual culture and spiritual discernment and devotion of the heart.

Men appear to find a happy entrance into almost every field of knowledge except the knowledge of God. Of course in a true sense every knowledge of the mind and heart contributes to the discernment of God, but this is only personally true when the self-conscious

habit of mind relates all truth to its source and definitely brings God personally and intimately near and consciously present to the thinking mind. He would be a bold man who would assert that this is a characteristic of modern intellectual activity. Without passing any hasty judgment on the manners and methods of modern thought it may be justly said that where faith and reverence are not deepened by truth and the discovery of truth, the highest fruit of knowledge in character and conduct is so far wanting. Unsanctified thinking and the vainglory of knowledge may rob the soul of the culture it most requires.

It may be safely said that there is no greater need of our time or greater thing to be desired of our hearts than that truth should be received as a personal inspiration and that it should be related to a reverent recognition of God as real and present in the mind. Much of what is described as scepticism and unbelief is just the failure in personal conscious effort to relate truth to God and moral responsibility. It is moral unbelief and not intellectual perplexity that endangers the soul, and it is lack of spiritual culture in the heart that robs the intellectual life of men of its fairest and most refreshing fruit. Knowledge unrelated to its living source, and godless in its use, may work the havoc of the soul and leave the heart empty and the will paralysed.

Sooner or later this truth comes home to solitary hearts with a painful urgency. The soul confession of George John Romanes reads like a confession of the martyrs without their hope of heart: "It is certain there are agnostics who would greatly prefer being theists and theists who would give all they

possess to be Christians, if they could thus secure promotion by purchase—namely, by a single act of will. But yet the desire is not strong enough to sustain the will in perpetual action so as to make the continual sacrifices which Christianity entails. *Perhaps the hardest of these sacrifices, to an intelligent mind, is that of his own intellect.* At least I am certain that this is so in my own case. I have been so long accustomed to constitute Reason my sole judge of truth that even though reason itself tells me it is not unreasonable to expect that the heart and will should be required to join with reason in seeking God, for religion is for the whole man, I am too jealous of my reason to exercise my will in the direction of my most heartfelt desires. For, assuredly, the strongest desire of my nature is to find that that nature is not deceived in its highest aspirations. Yet I cannot bring myself so much as to make a venture in the direction of faith. . . . Even the simplest act of will in regard to religion, that of prayer, has not been performed by me for at least a quarter of a century, simply because it has seemed so impossible to pray. As it were hypothetically, that much as I have desired to be able to pray, I cannot will the attempt."

This is an illuminating analysis, poignant in its significance and sharp in its clearness and penetration. Thought-energy may be divorced from will-energy and the complete culture of the soul missed, to the painful regret of the maimed spirit.

If this be so with those who are faithful with themselves in the region of knowledge and of clean character, what is to be said for those, the multitude in life, who can scarce be considered to think at all?



The age for the mass of men is an age of knowledge, but it may be doubted if it is an age of first-class and first-hand thinking. The average man is hurried through life immersed in the activities of daily bread and butter. His profession, career or daily labour take all his time, all his attention, and all his ambition. Life is lived in the pressure of a consuming conflict of affairs or duties or wage-earning tasks. The soul is forgotten, if indeed it is not remembered to be debased in the bodily enjoyments that are the reactions from intense labour and outworn energies. There is no room for the culture of the inner sense and the offices of religion and the meditation of the heart. To this may be added that men do not think for themselves but with a certain use of ideas that belong to the class consciousness, and the habitual fellowship in the mass to which they belong.

There is nothing so uncommon to-day as independent and original thinking. The self for many is lost in the mass, and the religion of the personal soul for many has ceased to have any meaning. Men think in the mass and move in the mass, immersed in the life-struggle that is closest to them. God is remote. Personal religion and the meditation of the heart on spiritual relationships becomes an unknown thing. Personal religion ceases to have reality in face of the urgency of temporal conditions and the economics of daily existence. It is clear that Jesus knew the pressure of life and the anxieties of daily care, but He refused to lose His soul. Even good men to-day are in this danger. They may be so immersed in life as to miss life.

Some one has remarked " that in our distracted and



overcrowded life it requires a great deal of effort to keep up our friendships with each other." If our urgency of daily temporal living is robbing us of the intimacies of love, impoverishing us of helpful personal relationships, and depriving us of strength-giving fellowships, how much more may a distracted and overcrowded life rob us of the friendship and intimacy of God. There must come a new awakening to reality. The will-energy must be asserted and the responsible attitude of life taken. No adequate ideal of life can be maintained if God is far distant or finally banished from thinking and living. There is no compensation for the loss of the faith, the hope, the reverence and the divine love of life. Everything that makes life worth living depends on soul culture. The moan of the dying Paracelsus will be on the lips of men, and in the heart of a decadent society and civilization, unless personal soul culture can be revived and quickened.

"Love, hope, fear, faith, these make humanity.  
These are its signs, its notes, its character,  
And these I have lost—gone from me for ever."

Men speak as if the revival of the religious life were the concern of priests, evangelists and ecclesiastics. Its deepest concern is for the man in the street and for the multitude in the mass. Pharisees, priests and scribes pass, but the people abide, and it is for them that Jesus has reality and compassion. The sacred self of life must live by the bread of life, and that bread is the bread that cometh down from heaven.

"Our sacred selves, have we  
No charge to keep o'er this divinity  
That lives within us?"

“ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God.” God would speak with men and have His communications within them, and this is the essential soul culture. The nurture of life is not something transformed, as if by miracle, at the behest of the devil from the stones of the field ; it is the daily bread of the holy loving heart dwelling in God and living unto Him in the faith and service of humanity.

It may rightly be asked, How are men to be assisted to soul culture and to reverent and devout living ? There is no direct and immediate answer to this question. The deepest answer lies in the liberty and reality of Jesus. “ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.” Religious experiences vary according to faculty, capacity and temperament. Education of the spirit is a free thing, and the deeper the experience is, the less mechanical is its culture. The supreme thing is an attitude of soul, a turn of the mind, a temper of heart, and a resolute consecration of will. This total attitude of the spirit is not some intermittent experience. It is constituted in a mind and heart ever open and alert to receive the things of God, and a will steadfast against the motives or actions that bar God out from life. The soul of Jesus was as open as the day and as clean as driven snow. This becomes the endeavour of the pure in heart.

In contact with Jesus personality remains the same in its characteristic elements, but it is transformed into love and obedience, and distinctive faculty, capacity and temperament are open to the life in God. It belongs to personal responsibility in touch with the Spirit of God to discover how best the whole soul

shall freely receive of God, and show forth the tokens of His indwelling presence, His controlling love, and His abundant grace. The less artificial and mechanical the culture is, the better. The attempt to bring the soul into captivity to means and methods that have proved useful in the past will so far fail, if the devout life is placed under a restraint that the free soul does not acknowledge as natural and real. The free culture of Jesus is true to life, to love, to truth and to holiness. His life was given and devoted to God, all the parts of His inner life and outward service centred in an intimate relation to the Father, but there is never any sense of strain or an unnatural relation to daily living and to a holy and affectionate relationship to men in the life to be actually lived.

Jesus is always in touch with the reality of things and the service of life. His filial consciousness was a constant thing, and piety in a radiant health of soul suffused His whole being and activity. There is neither mannerism in His tone nor routine in His devotion. His culture of soul is a free intimacy with God in relation to every detail of actual living. His soul moved intensely, sincerely, reverently and fearlessly in the affection of God. He lived in the Father without any detachment from the reality of life. This, of course, is the supreme ideal, and the highest culture of the soul is to receive and rest in God as Jesus received and rested in Him.

It is along the line of this reality that modern men would do well to travel. The attempt in modern life to revive devotion by the imitation of mediæval practice wedded to a kind of social enthusiasm appears to us



unreal. A mere imitative devotional life, however sincere the practice of it may be, is something so far from the Reality of Jesus that it may readily become a barren self-deception in the region of the soul life. It is open to men to make use of all the spiritual heritage of the past and of all wherein the masters of spiritual culture have spoken. Soul confessions, rules for the conscience, and exercises toward spiritual-mindedness have made the centuries of faith rich with the literature of the spirit. The practices of the saints and their prayers have made the current of history fragrant with piety. Such aids to devotion as may be found useful are abundantly to hand. We are culpable in the laggard use of the experience of experts in the culture of the soul. It is, however, clear that every age must carve out its own channels for the river of life in the soul. Artificial devotions are no substitute for the Reality of God in the heart. At any moment the new life may begin, and once the celestial surgeon "stabs the spirit broad awake" means for the nourishing and cherishing of that new life must be taken with alertness and awareness, and with the concentration of self-conscious effort.

" When the spirit's true endowments  
Stand out plainly from its false ones,"

the way to the healthy culture of the soul is open. The "eye of the soul" will become clear, and a certain awe and austerity of self-discipline will be set up in the mind and heart.

No great fact can be realized without the effort of thought and the concentration of emotion and will. The knowledge of God requires meditation—not the



meditation of "whispering silences" or "absorbed intensities," but the contemplation of reality with all the faculties of mind and heart and will alive and energetic. There is nothing more foreign to Jesus than a dreamy spiritual imagination or a lazy luxury of a wandering mind waiting on some mystic illumination of the spirit. The spiritual experience disclosed in Jesus and in the experience of the New Testament life of souls is always close to reality. It has been well said that "self-discipline is self-simplification," and there is nothing more required of men to-day than that the knowledge of God and the exercise of man's soul should be freed from illusion as to meditation and unreality as to inward light and holiness. The most solemn of all realities is not to be degraded by mere passwords of sentiment or an exchange of symbols in the soul. The filial consciousness of man in relation to God finds its accurate culture in the apprehension of Jesus and a vivid receiving from Him and in Him the knowledge and love of the Father. In Jesus there is vital contact with God, and it is the contemplation and obedience of Jesus that constitutes the highest culture of man's soul.

The mind and heart of Jesus give reality in all relationships, and remove from the culture of the will the sense of vagueness which is the root evil of indefinite piety, and of a religious practice that is not grounded in the reality of life. The spiritual sense is the actual and concrete experience of Jesus in the heart, and the supreme culture of the soul is to take on this reality. Its very simplicity, directness and open-air vitality makes it supremely difficult, for he who attains to the Reality of Jesus has entered into the

knowledge and love of God and into the fulness of life. "To this end, then," says one of the greatest masters of the mystic life and the devotion of the heart, "gather in all thy thoughts, and by faith press to the centre, laying hold upon the Word of God."

Jesus is central, concrete and vital. Modern thought and life demand a visible and tangible reality in the religion of life. Spiritual thought, moral imagination, contemplation and prayer for modern men must possess a vital and adequate object. Neither formal practices of prayer, nor elegant and feeble forms of worship, nor barren semi-pagan expressions of soul culture, can satisfy the modern demand for reality.

We look for a new day of intelligent devotion, moral seriousness, and spiritual realism. God, personal and living, must be in immediate contact amid the realities of life. If forms of religion have lost this contact, they must pass away. Jesus is at once the illumination of the soul and the test of spiritual insight. He is the objective reality that gives vitality to the practice of the presence of God, and preserves soul culture from the futility of mere revolving round pious ideas, like millstones turning upon themselves with no golden grain to grind. The pious self grinding upon itself in a region of abstract spiritual yearning is not merely futile, it is fatal. It is not life, and it cannot therefore be God. Jesus is the tangible reality for personal thought and the absolute for obedience in spiritual and moral knowledge. We have the "mind of Jesus," which is the thought and purpose of God in the expressed terms of life, and in this reality our contact with God is established and

maintained. Soul culture is the bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The Religion of Jesus is life in the experimental knowledge of God, and hereby know we God by a living and affectionate intimacy.

## XVI

### THE CONTACT

IF religion, rightly conceived and duly exercised in the culture of the soul, is an intimate personal relationship with the personal God, then the question of actual and continuous contact is vital. The contact between God and the mind and heart of man must be maintained. It must be natural, real and constant. It must be vividly realized as an immediate and continuous action of the whole man. The Reality of Jesus reveals direct and daily contact with the character, will, thought and life of God. It reveals it as intense and constant in human and intimate realization. Those who would experience this contact with God must be clear as to its nature and method and exercise. Jesus liberates us from all artificial, traditional or unreal ideas as to what religion and communion with God is.

It is manifest that vital contact with the divine thought and purpose and life must be on the basis of character and according to a vital action of the soul. We see this contact of character and one-willedness clearly in Jesus. Character in relation to God is expressed in terms of holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth. At the outset, therefore, it is necessary



and useful to clear the ground as to unreal ideas as to what holiness is and as to what it implies in the actual realization of daily life. The conception requires illumination as to ideal and instruction as to practice. In Jesus there is the depth and simplicity of the religious life. Man's vivid realization of the reality has been progressive, and the progress towards a complete realization has been slow, just in proportion to the greatness and the simplicity of the ideal. It is necessary, therefore, to give patience and attention to holiness as expressed in the actual thought, will and life of Jesus.

The term holy in its primitive conception expresses the thought of apartness, the tabu circle, the place or object in relation to invisible powers and in contact with the divine life. It is, in the beginning, and in its rudimentary form, an apartness filling the mind with the awe, mystery, the life of the spirits, the gods, and the unknown powers. The idea is encompassed with superstition and fear. It belongs to a primitive instinct in man, once he emerges into even crude intuitions and ideas of the spirit life. We are not immediately concerned here with the modern effort to get at the history of man, as set forth in such studies as those of a book like *The Origin and Evolution of the Human Race*, by Professor Albert Churchwarden, or *The Antiquity of Man*, by Professor Arthur Keith. Such studies have their value. We are concerned with man at the stage he has reached when he is known to us as man. Whatever his history and relationship to the physical basis of life, and to the world-evolution of things, man as man is a spiritual being, seeking the realization of himself in moral responsi-

bility. He reaches the stage in history of personal spiritual self-realization. He has intuitions and ideals as to the divine life. However primitive these may be, they emerge.

The primitive conception of holiness may be crude, but it is real. It becomes an idea possessing creative energy. It is the progressive illumination of that idea that is instructive. It lies behind all natural and revealed religion. It is as vital a fact as any for investigation and instruction. No science of the history of man comes at the secret of man's progress and destiny, and does not press forward to the moral and spiritual realization of man. Any complete study includes the whole fact, and the supreme fact concerning man is the meaning of religion and the science of the soul. The idea of holiness confronts the inquirer. The field of inquiry includes a study of comparative religions and divine revelation. The term holiness clears and purifies as we proceed. The "tabu circle" passes into a more and more definite conception as the idea of God becomes clearer and purer. The conception of God in relationship enlarges and simplifies. Holiness is seen in relation to inward moral and spiritual character. The development of the idea in the Old Testament Scriptures is full of instruction. The instruction is that of reality, experience and life. There is the record of the Holy God, Holy Places, a Holy Nation, Holy Priests, Holy Prophets, Holy Altars, Holy Utensils, Holy Men. The story of the purification of the idea and the relation of the idea to life is a slow progression. Finally, holiness is seen to be a thing of inward character in relation to moral obedience and spiritual fulfilment.

"I will put my law within them, and in their heart will I write it."

This is a supreme advance. Holiness is seen in relation to personal character and the obedience of righteousness in actual life. To keep this conception clear in responsible action is, however, difficult.

It comes upon us with some surprise that the idea, once seen, should be in danger of any corruption. It is, however, in this constant danger. The human mind is in constant peril of corrupting the idea. Its moral simplicity and spiritual grandeur create this peril. Holiness tends to become artificial and unreal. Its moral and spiritual simplicity makes it supremely difficult, and so the human effort falls from the ideal and seeks artificial substitutes. The Reality of Jesus makes this strikingly evident. He came of a race and a religion instructed in holiness. He was loyal to His race, and to His religion, and to the divine reality.

It is with some surprise, therefore, that we come upon His total avoidance of the term "holy," the thing itself being so manifest in Him. Jesus was familiar with the term "holy," yet He avoids it. He would seem to recognize the danger of a traffic of words in handling a supreme fact. He was, for instance, familiar with the term, "the Holy One," as applied to God, yet He never uses it except in relation to the word Father, which places it in terms of intimate personal human relationship. He was familiar with the phrase, "Be ye holy as I am holy," as expressing the aspiration after the higher life, yet He avoids the word and says, "Be ye perfect (mature) as your Father in heaven is perfect." He never applies the



word "holy" to men or to disciples. He never uses the word in respect to things, except once in the form of a proverb, where the conception cannot be corrupted—"Cast not that which is holy unto the dogs." There must be a supreme and adequate idea underlying this evident avoidance of the term "holy" by Jesus. He never leaves us in doubt as to the reality of the fact, the practice and the experience of holiness. He simply refuses the word. The reason seems manifest. He feared its misapprehension and its misconception. He knew that reality here was vital. He lived the idea. He lived it naturally, humanly and completely. "For this cause I sanctify myself" left nothing unrevealed or unfinished. The holy life is seen in Jesus, but it has nothing artificial or unreal about it. *Holiness for men is life as Jesus lived it.* It is life in freedom, in naturalness, and in supreme contact with God and the realities of experience and duty. God is holy as the moral and spiritual reality of the world. God is in contact with men. Men are in contact with God. To maintain that intimate personal contact and to express it in human terms is to be holy. Holiness in man is the moral and spiritual reproduction of God in terms of human character and conduct, and the Reality of Jesus is supreme in this disclosure in terms of living. It is the contact of character in the fullest expression of life.

It will be clearly seen how revolutionary this is when the reality seeks application. The religious life needs to be cleared in its expression and action. To live the holy life as Jesus lived it, without strain or artificiality, is supremely difficult. It is the only reality of holiness that is worthy. A modern writer



speaks thus, and we feel that he speaks truly: "The idea of a holy working man is grotesque." What is meant is that, even at this time of day, the Reality of Jesus is not clearly seen or practised. Holy living is still looked upon as out of touch with human reality in daily life. The idea is still corrupted. Religion is identified with something not in vital contact with God and living. It becomes, therefore, the more necessary to make clear the Reality of Jesus in will and in action. Asceticism and monasticism served a great purpose. They were phases of holiness that bore a special witness, but they were not the complete thing. The world has outlived them. Various periods of history have placed their special emphasis on what constitutes the spiritual life. Puritanism speaks in its own terms and wrought its great work in its own day. Mid-Victorian evangelism gives witness to its own phase of religious well-being. Tractarianism, in a narrower sphere, brings renewal to things ready to perish.

The reaction from materialism has given rise to numerous efforts to realize the spiritual life in recent days. There is a reality of good in all phases of devout effort and real experience. It rests with modern men to gather up all the best of the past, to discard what is limited, and to move forward to new issues and realizations. Spent forces give place to new life, and the Reality of Jesus awaits application to human experience and endeavour in the realization of holiness as He presents it and as He empowers men to live it. It is the contact of character in relation to God and to life. It exalts life to the highest in devotion and consecration, and yet keeps it in direct relationship

to the reality of things. It is in the world, but not of it. It preserves that intimate awe and reverence that is alive to God and which imports into life the tone of divine purity, singleness of heart, and humility of sacrificial endeavour which preserves as salt from corruption and evil. It becomes a law of life demanding the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, and which never permits the relaxation of the will from the utmost in self-devotion and self-consecration.

This holiness, this contact of character in life with God, has no limit to its liberty, love and obedience. Its vision is the vision of the pure in heart. The measure of its obedience is the measurement of the Cross. The savage licence of the world is its agony; but to the reality of holiness belongs the delicacy of spiritual discernment and the absoluteness of a perfect obedience. The reality makes no truce with sin, and it seeks the sanctification which is the righteousness revealed from faith to faith. Life becomes as sacred an intimacy as the divine thought and purpose can make it. The flesh is caught up into the spirit, and the mind and heart dwell in the secret place and pass out into the action whereby the love and righteousness of God prevail in life and society. Every relationship is cleansed and enriched. Life is no longer fragmentary in its honour, nobility and truth, but holiness is a signature of the street and a sign upon the very bells of the horses. The religious life is not marooned. Holiness lies not in detachments but in fulfilments, and the contacts of character and conduct are complete.

The essential element in maintaining this contact both on its divine and human side is that exercise of mind and heart, that action of the soul and of life, which

men have called prayer. Prayer is the reality of contact with God. It is the supreme energy and action of the soul. It is the means and method of vital contact with God. The act of personal contact with God is the act of prayer. The action may be simple or complex. It is the action which brings the whole mind and will of man into direct and conscious intercourse with God. It is the inclusion of the total experience in the divine relationship. It includes many things. It may include problems and difficulties, details and combinations. It is an action wherein man gets back to the source of his life and the resource of his being. It is the intention of the soul establishing contact with the will, the mind, the essence, the energy of things. It is this in the personal affection of the heart and the expression of the mind, and the concentration of the will on God Himself.

There is no real question here of prayer in relation to what are termed the laws of the universe. Prayer is a law of the spiritual life and is in itself one of the highest laws and one of the most efficient energies in the world. Speculative and theoretic discussions as to prayer are futile. Prayer is an energy of the soul as real as life, and as absolute in its working as any operative force in the world. We may rightly investigate its operations, but it is the exercise and action of prayer that carries its own proof. It is one of the chief contributions of modern thought and expanding knowledge that men to-day see more and more clearly what prayer is as the method and medium of direct contact with God and with the facts of experience. It is the action of the whole man in relation to God and in relation to a universe the supreme significance of which is the



spiritual value of things. It is part of the unity and majesty of the divine nature of the soul and of the universe itself.

In the Reality of Jesus we see this, and see it clearly. Jesus places contact with God, and prayer as the means of contact, at the centre of experience and action. The aroma of prayer and direct communion with God fills every crevice of the tone, temper and action of His life. In the action of prayer He is certain, definite and unconditional, and His whole energy of life responds to what prayer is and as to what it accomplishes. He confounds our small ideas as to the range of prayer and as to its dynamic power in relation to everything that concerns us and others. Men saw that He prayed in a different way from everybody else, and they made spontaneous request of Him to be taught how to pray. They perceived in Him that praying personality had "eternal value for God" and immediate value for the conditions of experience and the circumstances of character and life. It is man's highest vocation to pray, and it is his well-being in proportion as he learns how to pray intelligently and convincingly. Prayer is where man's thought passes into divine action in relation to God and to immediate necessity. It becomes more certain than thought, and in the action of will enters into possession and realization. To pray badly is to think imperfectly. To be without prayer is to be without self-realization. "Men pray to live and live to pray." Life at its best is the establishment of divine contact. A prayerless man is engaged in life as if struggling in a morass. A prayerful man, however limited and straitened in himself, is in an effective relationship both to God and to the circumstances of



life. Prayer is power, and every final energy lies behind and within that power.

The subject need not be further laboured. If any man doubts this effectiveness of energy and supreme action, let him turn to prayer and conform his will to open and direct contact with God as the supreme secret of efficient living. Let him watch Jesus at prayer, and learn of Him the reality of life—"And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a lonely place, and there prayed."

The fact is before us vividly in the setting of actual need. We see Jesus in the midst of the day's work and amid the strain of life. He had many a busy day as a carpenter in the ordinary task of the daily round of bread-winning. He was encompassed for years with the ordinary anxieties of life and of neighbourly intercourse. He knew the secret of God for the ordinary and daily healthy necessity.

He passed to a different type of life. His days became more concentrated, and harsher forces surrounded Him. He became engaged in the mental, moral and spiritual activities by which life is redeemed. He is at the end of a busy day of ministry to the needs of men in body, mind and soul. He is visibly exhausted with that weariness of mind and nerve that arises out of energies of mind and heart and will in outgoing virtue and the personal magnetism of soul activity. We see Him at the end of the days spent with a weariness and an anxiety that the days of the Carpenter never knew. There is the withdrawal of the night. The refuge of His lodging with His few intimate friends, supper, a brief review in considered conversation, and

the retirement. He sleeps the short sleep of physical exhaustion. He awakens, restless and sleepless. The mind is quick with coursing thoughts—the inexplicable weight of the needs of men, the moral crisis of the world, the condition of society, the needs of the multitude, the balance of forces, the vision of the hour, the future day, the chasing thoughts of the night watch of the Son of Man. One thought is supreme. God's work in the world and the moral and spiritual recovery of men, all this, and more, and the need of heart and mind and will is at its extremity. There is only one open way. Up and out into the open and the night. He leaves the restless pillow for the windswept places of the night and the Heart of God. There is no way but the roadway of the soul to the source of energy and the place of contact.

This is one of the great pictures of the Son of Man. It is no isolated instance. It is a crisis moment in the current of affairs, and the soul action is in accord with the tone and inner temper of the whole inner man and the habit of a lifetime, the intuition as to prayer and the proved experience of a mind and heart and will in continuous contact with the source and resource of life. The period of prayer-action is intense and prolonged. Body, mind, will and spirit are all profoundly and searchingly engaged. Petition passes into communion, communion into intimate personal realization. There is no waste of energy, no wrongness of intention, no perverseness of attitude, no passionate, hopeless gnawing and grinding of self upon self, no traversing of perplexity upon perplexity; no turning of thought upon thought in a passionate surging struggle, the self turning back upon itself "like a barren salt-corrod-

ing sea." It is self-exposure passing into self-revealing, and the intaking of the life of God for the restoration of nerve and mind and will. It is necessity passing into the resources of power, and to the quietude of energies rebraced in the certainties of self-possession. The recovery is complete.

With the first light of the dawn and the first cold breath across the hills of the new day, prayer, the complete establishment of divine contact, has its perfect work. It is well Jesus thus prayed in the reality of life, for with the new day the desire of men meets Him and the message comes to Him, "All men seek for thee." It was well He grasped God's hand in the night, for the day's work never ends of Him who seeks and saves.

A clear sight of Jesus praying is our rebuke and instruction. He discloses the reality of contact and the energy of life. He leaves us penitent on account of our blindness and the subterfuges of our thought and heart. He leaves us wistfully yearning amid the coarseness of our way of living, and the cry rises involuntarily to our hardened lips, "Lord, teach us how to pray."

It is not our lack of prayer so much as our manner of praying that requires instruction. Only God Himself knows the weird, wild prayers that come from the hearts of men and women—the continuous cries that rise from weary and desolate hearts, from caverns of vice, from the night-streets of cities, from valley and village, from the islands of the sea, from chambers of anguish, and from hillsides, of heart desolation! Only God knows how full the cup of the intercession of Jesus is. The task of our living is continuous, and truly we

know not what to pray for as we ought. Our power to pray is the final victory of our spirit, and the place of contact is the place of power ; and no anarchy of the mind can rob us of the intuition of the heart.

The final experience of life is the compulsion to pray, lending passion to our yearnings till they pass beyond the range of words. The experience sifts us and silences us. " In that day ye shall ask me nothing." Meantime the Reality of Jesus fits our necessity. " Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The way to the divine contact is open, and in union with God there is serenity.



## XVII

### THE SERENITY

NOTHING seems farther from our modern thought than serenity. Nothing is more to be desired for mind and heart than a sense of quietude born of the conscious sense of reserve power and the realization of self-possession of soul. It belongs to the culture of the soul to enter into this possession. A religion that does not convey peace to the conscience, the mind and the heart is defective at the centre. An intimate, realized sense of God has a stilling quality at the core of all external tumult, restlessness, strife and antagonism. The harshness of life must needs be, but the inner reality of the heart in contact with God is peace. "My God and my all," says Thomas à Kempis. "Thou art all things to me. Thou makest quietness of heart and great peace and festive joy."

The efficiency of active life depends on the inner resources of serenity. Life is on the way to the saddest failure, unless there be some triumphant sense of inward restfulness and a consciousness of the way of the soul being fulfilled, where amid all conflict "sweet flowers of piety and poetry still perfume the path of the humble." The peace of God surpasseth all understanding, but it stands guard to sentinel the heart and to equip the life with the

energies that dare and do. Without peace there is no power, and without power there is no peace. The incoming and outgoing of God's peace is an experience of reality at the very centre of the hostilities of life. It is the sense of God in the tumult of the heart and amid the experiences of the common day.

This serenity of God is to be discovered in the most unexpected places. It should be a universal experience. One would suppose that the shelter of a gallant ship's fo'c'sle would be the last place one would expect to find it, yet from this very place a wayfarer of the sea thus writes: "Reverently, as becomes one who feels that he is treading upon holy ground, I declare that at times in these solemn moments of silence the tide of happiness rose so high that we were fain to ask the Lord to stay His hand; the frail creature could hold no more and live. This sensation was not in the least artificial; it came without any attempt of ours to produce it; it filled our hearts with love, joy and peace, and made us in every sense truer men."

This serenity belongs to the Reality of Jesus. It is not an isolated virtue, but the composure of the whole man in the stress of life. It is a receptive and yet energizing attitude of soul towards the encompassing circumstances and conditions of life and duty. When things are at the deepest stress the serenity of inward peace is all the more essential. Life is a strain. Soul-life is the greatest strain of all. There is need, therefore, of a realized sense of peace in the secret of which there is no misapprehension nor miscalculation.

Happiness has been described as the adjustment of

inward desires to outward circumstances. This may be a good description of something to be gladly desired, but it is futile if the outward circumstance has power to dominate the situation. The heart has neither security nor serenity in the effort to accomplish the adjustment. A deeper power must govern the inwardness of the soul. Men seek peace and pursue it, but it eludes their grasp. So difficult has it appeared in attainment that men have projected its possibility beyond the confines of our temporal life. Men picture peace and yearn for it, but the drive of life makes it an expectation rather than an immediate possession. It is clear that serenity of heart ought to be an immediate and present possession. It is a condition of the highest use of personal faculty and of efficient living. It ought to be the present and happy first-fruits of a living and active faith. It is a result in the soul of an absolute faith in God, in self, and in the final issue of things ; and every effort should be made to retain it and to live up to it and to abide in it. It is the cure for the doubt, the fear and the uncertainty that rob life of joy and efficiency. It is that something amid all the journeyings of the heart, the conflicts of the soul, the agitations of the mind, and the coarse engrossments of inferior living, which maintains man's vision of the standards of value, the proportions of character, and the opportunities of action and service.

It is not obtained by evasion of the world but by the possession of spirit which retains a grip upon the circumstances of living and of enduring. It ripens to a heavenly grace that gives mastery to character and service. It is not the serenity of inactivity, nor of

withdrawal from the world, nor a peace that deprives the soul of progressive experience. It is manifest in Jesus, and it is *His special gift* to the men and women who enter into His view of God, of life and of duty. It is His special gift to the weary and the heavy laden. It becomes a yoke upon patient shoulders until the fruitful furrow of life is completed and cleanly turned. This peace of Jesus, and the serenity of the enduring heart, are a precious gift. It belongs to the Reality of Jesus to convey it. He gives it to His own, to the men and women of His faith and tone and temper, and it is a gift of unspeakable value. Neither in its nature, nor in its value, nor in its method, can the world give it. The world has its own gifts, inferior or superior, its wealth, its success, its power, its pleasure, but it cannot impart peace. Possessions do not in themselves bring serenity. The peace of Jesus is the inward product of the sense of God's presence, of union with Him, and of life and experience seen through His mind and will. It becomes a dominant element, a restful certainty, an attitude of the heart towards things present and to come. It is a power to be at peace amid the ambitions or the anxieties, the failures or the triumphs of life. The nature of the serenity of faith is the possession of the reality of faith amid the turbulence and distraction of all temporal concerns.

In many directions there is a passionate vileness at the root of the restlessness of the human heart and of human society. The sin and selfish passion of men makes serenity impossible. Jesus came in contact with it all. He passed through life in the midst of human strife, tumult and antagonism. There was no



passion of hatred or malignity with which He was not confronted. The inveterate villainy of the priest encompassed Him, the coarse selfishness of money-changers surrounded Him. The turbulence of the multitude, blind and ill-led, surged around Him. The subtlety of personal enmity was not wanting. It gleamed upon Him in the deadly glitter of Judas eyes. He moved amid it all with the mastery of a steady calm, and with the efficiency of an inward peace that nothing could finally overcome. He moved onward through every distraction with a good intention, an unflinching will. He was not diverted by false issues, His vision was never obscure, and perhaps the deepest wonder of all was that He retained His belief in men and in the goodness at the root of things amid the most cruel turbulence.

Love lived in Him supreme above every passion, and His holy intimacy with God sustained His inward soul, and maintained His faith in men, in duty and in destiny. His life in every circumstance held the inner secret. This secret cannot be imparted mechanically as a transferred gift, but it can become the possession of men and women of the Religion of Jesus. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," experiences as restless as the surface of a wind-swept sheet of water, "but in me ye shall have peace"—the tranquillity of the inner deep, which no storm disturbs.

There is a deep significance in the terms Jesus uses when He conveys this gift of serenity. "My peace," He says, "I leave with you." The word does not convey the idea of an official or dying bequest. The meaning is, rather, I leave, send forth from myself as a king sends forth an expedition, or as a sailor un-

moors a boat. It is an active, authoritative, and skilled effort by which Jesus imparts His peace, the serenity in which He undertook and outlived life. My peace I give, hand on actively to you. It is a peace-guaranteeing performance, a dynamic gift of empowering and enduring life. This is a peace that none could exemplify or present unless he had sounded the very depths of human experience. It is something definite and practical in relationship to the total effort of life. It is not so much a mystic hope or a brooding sentiment of the heart as a self-possession of will in the inner mastery of powers as the whole personality goes forth to meet every emergency. This gift is, therefore, the serenity of a dynamic faith. It is imparted and received experimentally, and becomes a victorious attitude of soul in the relations of life. When we say it is experimentally imparted and received as a thing arising out of vital union with God, we mean that it is a thing actual in the immediate handling and not merely a spiritual yearning, indefinitely hoped for and longed for as some far-off dream to be realized. It is a gift to be presently used and as constituting the inward reserve force of energetic life. Peace in believing is a great spiritual present possession of the soul. All men desire it and seek it, but the reality of its possession belongs to a man's actual experience of the incoming of God and the indwelling of Jesus in the heart.

Innumerable artists have depicted with genius and feeling the haven of the ships. Many poets have put in language, coloured and chaste, the picture of the incoming boat to the haven under the hill ; but it is the fisherman's wife and children, and the man himself,

who know what the harbour is and means. The sense of its security and serenity is a vitally deeper thing than the pigments of the painter or the song of the poet. So is it with a man's soul when he enters into and lives the life of God's peace.

" Yet though the sacred fire be dull  
In folds of thwarting matter furled,  
Grant me to know, to seek, to find,  
In some small measure though it be,  
Emerging from the waste and blind,  
The clearer self, the grander me ! "

When we attain this reality in life, we are on the way to that progressive experience of serenity which is the gift of the faith of Jesus. It is a gift of unimagined power.

This gift of serenity instructs us in the adjustment of life and its conflicting forces. It adjusts the body, the mind, and the will to the total experience of life. The inwardness of the spirit is placed in command of circumstances both outward and inward, and the sense of serenity is never overborne. When the Apostle Paul, encompassed with the strain of life and service, wrote in the year 61 from a prison cell, he was filled with the sense of this realized peace in the tumult of desire and action. He wrote a vivid word : " Let the peace of God *rule* in your heart." The word for " rule " is rich in its instruction (*βραβεύετο*). Let the peace of God regulate, adjust, administer your heart. He had a long and varied experience as to the problem and difficulty of serenity of soul. The thoughts that course within the mind of a first-class intelligence, the higher problems of the spirit that burn in the heart of the national and social idealist, the



frustrations of men, the agitations of empire, and the spiritual issues of history, had all their place in his experience. The adjustment of the inner life and the serenity of clear vision and constant duty, the stability of character and the constancy of service, were all known to this man in their intensity and difficulty. He knew there was no facile way of man's spirit where reality was to be realized. "Let the peace of God administer and adjust your heart," he cries; and he knew the profound deep of the soul which discovers the Reality of Jesus in the serenity of life and endeavour. Let the complex forces and passions of the soul be *fitted*. That is the root-meaning of his pregnant word for the authority of peace. Let emotion, mind and will be "fitted," as a carpenter would, with skill, mortise his material, or as a musician would harmonize his symphony. So let the mind that was in Jesus regulate the heart, and the tranquillity of God administer the garrison of the soul.

This serenity is a way of stern discipline and constant alertness as to spiritual issues and moral responsibility. It is the chastened result of a guarded and well-regulated habit of the interior life, "casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Self-possession is won in self-discipline, and the tranquillity of God the highest and deepest experience of the wayfaring soul of man. Until we reach this serenity life has us at the hazard of every moment, and we "carry on" upon a thread of circumstance a sick existence,

"Along the blind charm'd way to nothingness."



The long history of the saints is the story of Christ's peace, the record of the redeemed conscience is the story of the serenity of forgiveness, and the writing of the inner heart is the song of the divine peace. All true religion must have capacity for receptive experience. The passivity of a soul that is alive unto God is one of its greatest gifts. There can be no reserve force of quietude in the heart that is not constantly open to the silent incoming of spiritual thought and emotion. To possess God's peace is to be ever receiving God's energy and power. Modern men are in danger of confounding activity with reality.

The greatest moments of the soul are passive. This passivity is not inaction, but it is restraint from externals. It is the moment when every faculty and power of the personal life is alert and waiting to receive. "It is within religion's most intimate circle that we realize those moments. Religion, on one side of it at least, is an inwardness, a sacred hush, a sabbatismos." "It is the soul resting in itself and in the thought of the Divine—a musing, a contemplation, a vision of the unseen, a feeding upon the hidden manna." These are the moments of the soul's richest activity, and it is during such moments that the resources of God flood the mind and heart, and give the vision, and the substance, and the action of serenity. It is moments such as these that modern men lack. The interior life is starved and the exterior life is barren of spiritual power. The serenity of life is a lost art, simply because there is no proportion between the efforts after external activities and the inner reserve of the hidden life—the life that possesses all things, all teachers, all world resources, life or death ; for we are Christ's, and Christ is God.

It is to the men and women of the hidden heart that the strength and security of life belong. It is from the hidden life that the ultimate forces of progress proceed ; to them belong the majesty of the unveiled years, and from them proceed the clean waters of life that cleanse the channels of society and the heart. It lies ready to our hand, this life of the inward peace. We live it, hand to hand with the harsh strife of outward things. We know and understand more than enough : it is realization we lack—the inner possession of the divine love, the divine holiness, and the divine action. The world needs to come again, after its own fashion, and in accord with its new necessities, to the fragrant garden where God talks with men in the cool of the day, and reveals to them “the modes and manners of the Almighty Love that searches out our secrets.” The world is restless under the enchantment of its own driving and confused forces. It languishes in dreamy hope, futile in its efforts for lack of the interior life of the spirit and the hidden love of God. Until men learn the secret of their own vanity, they will scarce discover the secret of God, by whose will and in whose heart there is the treasure of tranquillity and the energy of faith. For the man who lives in God all experiences lead to God, and the serenity of a liberating, energizing and restful faith is the inner power in which the total and continuous life resides. Life is encountered and closed with, not in a solitary self-consciousness, but in a conscious divine relationship that gives quietude for whatever may befall.

This is neither fatalism nor mysticism, but the operating faith of the reality of Jesus and the alert religion of His peace. It is the serenity of such as live

in a continuous and happy confidence in the divine Fatherhood and in the realized sense that "all things work together for good to them that love God." It evades no challenge. It rests in no lethargy. It meets events and matches them with the victorious energy that empowers the will with the inner resources of a mind and heart at rest *from itself* and *in itself*. "There is no fear in love, for love casteth out fear," and where the love of God is there is serenity. Life ceases to have either regret or foreboding. It abides in a restful and enduring confidence with the Cross full in view. The tranquillity of God sees the issue and endures the conflict, and in everything understands that the end of these things is Peace. "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The serenity of the soul abides in solace. It possesses the recreative power of a sense of the interpretation of life from within and the conviction of security in the issues of life. The reality and religion of Jesus show us how little in truth we have entered into life, and how busy we have been with the mere externals of things. Life is life at the heart, and its essential secret is the quietude of God. Life here is central, and it radiates comfort and power and peace.

## XVIII

### THE SOLACE

I TRUST none will accuse one of lack of thought in placing the word "Solace" at the head of this chapter rather than the great and gracious word "Comfort." The reason is this—comfort in its common use is a full word which has fallen on evil days. It has become weakened and limited in its meaning and in its use. The word in itself is stalwart. It is strong and full in its significance. It has become identified with superficial emotions and inadequate ideas. Men speak of comfort in relation to some one department of experience, instead of the whole ground of the heart necessity. The solace of the soul is the filling of the whole man after the sense of emptiness and loss. The need for comfort is universal. It arises in a variety of ways and according to diverse occasions. The necessity for it is practically continuous.

The universal fellowship of pain, the comradeship of sorrow, the burden of the spirit, the sense of solitude and loss, the doubt and fainting of the soul, the hostility of life, the ruthlessness of death, and the menace of perplexity, care and fear in daily living all send forth the cry for help and comfort in the riven heart. It is useful therefore to illumine the reality and meaning of words. Consolation has been described as the act



or process of giving comfort. Comfort is the personal consciousness of relief. Solace is the sense of liberty from stress and the entry into recreative refreshment and energy. If the word comfort is used as covering the whole ground, it is rightly used, and accomplishes a perfect work. If it is used in limitation, both the source and nature of consolation are in danger of being either misunderstood or delusively experienced.

This is the reason of so much that is inadequate in the realization of solace. The arrest of a great compassion falls upon the mind when we contemplate the multitude of men and women who need comfort, and how few possess it in reality. It is a matter of plain observation that men seek to dismiss and forget their trials, without moving forward into hearty and intelligent vision and interpretation. They take refuge in all kinds of unrealities, and in the last issue the comfort amounts to the delusions of superstition or the illusions of the numbness of the soul in the effort to forget, or the false oblivion of feeling in the engrossments of inferior living. One of the saddest things in modern life is the number of empty hearts, yearning, amid excitement, false enjoyment or overbearing occupation, for the reality of the solace of the soul. In all times of special strain and stress there arises a variety of delusive cults that bears witness to the need and desire for a comfort and a consolation that is not realized. Sensitive souls without an adequate foundation of faith or a sure range of thought are rushed into delusions of the mind or heart.

Wise men have found a philosophy of life in endurance or in the analysis of superior satisfactions. A creed of hardness or of happiness may be inade-

quate, but there is no reason that it should be debased. Every age gives rise to its own conception of the stoic or the epicurean. Both may agree that a passionless tranquillity constitutes the science of living, and comfort takes end in a theory of indifference or a practice of cold recklessness. In the long run, the empty heart will take its own revenge. An age of intellect without feeling, engrossed in its own materialism, becomes an age of new superstitions and credulity. I think it was Meredith that remarked that "if you try to drown human nature, it is sure to come up again, and not with its *head* first." Imagination and emotion without mind have no possible reserve force of permanent consolation, and mind without feeling brings its own Nemesis. The root cause of perverted conceptions of comfort is godlessness. When God departs from a Saul, you may be certain to find him soon in a Cave of Endor, of which cave there are various dimly lit modern reproductions as substitutes for the reality of faith and the resources of comfort.

The revival of the occult is the pathetic witness to the need of human solace, and the tragic testimony to the revenge the spiritual instinct takes when materialistic living and irreverent thinking have robbed the soul of its heritage in the living, immanent, personal God. The home-sickness of the soul asserts itself. When godlessness and the hunger of the soul meet, they betake themselves to dens and caves of the earth. Reality demands the open air, the solace, the power to breathe, the recreation of vital forces, and the recovery of the soul in God and in the healthy reaction of mental and spiritual recovery.

The root cause of man's bewilderment, his desire for comfort and his failure to attain it, is the remote sense most men have of a personal and living God. The Reality of the comfort lies in the Reality of the Presence. Comfort is a personal ministration, the solace of God, to the distressed heart. It is an emotional realization of the divine love, but it is something deeper. It is the conscious realization of the mind and the establishment of the will in contact with the God of our life, according to the complete need of our immediate experience. In the Reality and Religion of Jesus it is God called to our aid, felt as present, known as understanding, and received as soothing, strengthening, holding and sustaining. Solace has its source in the religion of the heart. It is never complete in a mere reasoning of the mind, nor in a mere sentiment of the feeling; it is a realized sense of God, intimate, actual and bracing.

The essence of comfort is the sense of liberty from *loneliness*, a consciousness of freedom from solitary endurance, an experience of waiting, of interpretation, of expectation, of present help and of enduring confidence. It is the conscious sense of God's presence with us and actively engaged on our behalf, communicating love, patience, fortitude, sympathy, power and peace. Jesus knew this as the reality for Himself. "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." He knew it as the reality for men. "I will not leave you comfortless, desolate in loneliness: I will come unto you." "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter (παράκλητος)," one called in, summoned to the side of another, for immediate help, comradeship and the exact energy of co-operating



assistance needed. To be comfortless is to be forsaken. To be comforted is to be companioned.

The solace of God is the companionship of God, and, when the sense of this understanding and divine comradeship fills the heart and braces the will, the soul has that sense of renewal which refines and enriches, and which not merely brings the inbreathed sense of relief but empowers the whole soul to find itself and to hold its mastery over thought, feeling and event.

The difficulty is to find God in the emergency. Men and women live so far away from God in the ordinary that they have difficulty in laying their hand upon Him when trouble and sorrow fall upon them. The culture of the heart is neglected and the contact of the soul is intermittent. They are taken unawares, and know not how to find God with any sort of familiar readiness. It was not so with Jesus. He lived so in the Father that the way of sorrow found Him ready. It deepened but the intensity of the divine union. The crisis revealed no new attitude and disclosed no fatal faltering. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," was the attitude of a lifetime, and while the anguish remained the solace of God matched it. The agony of Gethsemane was not a desire of evasion, but an appeal that the way might be made clear and the one-willedness distinct. The fear of death did not encompass Jesus, but the intensity of the interpretation and meaning of His dying compassed Him about. Not the cross but the Way of the Cross was the amazement of His spirit. He went forward on that way confirmed in the divine fellowship and sustained unto victory.



It belongs to the divine love that it is not absent from us even when we neglect it. God finds us in our grief, even with the quickening of the forgetful. The trouble of life is God's ministry of recall. Trouble is never the same when we are *inside it*. The need brings the awaredness of God, and from the inner heart of a grief and a fear there comes the renewed sense of the Presence, and this is comfort's perfect work.

The God of all consolation works in us, not in any artificial external solace, but by revealing Himself in us and for us. The solace of the soul is the divine vision and the divine interpretation of sorrow. Comfort is not merely relief, it is fulfilment, and death itself is an enrichment of the divine fellowship.

There is a picture by J. H. Lorimer that lingers in my memory. It is simple in conception and exquisite in execution. It is a room with the window to the west; the twilight is falling, but the lamp is not yet lit. The table is furnished. A woman stands waiting in assured expectation. The fellowship of love and life will fill that room before the twilight falls to curtained companionship and joy. The room of our life awaits the filling of the Presence. Whether the artist intended it or not, that picture lingers in my recollection as the symbol of divine love, tenderness and holy comfort, flooding and filling the chambers of life and recesses of the soul.

There are many sources of solace. God gives us cheer and courage on every side, the love of friends, the memories of grace and beauty, the surprises of temporal providences, the chastening of ideals, the ministries of innumerable services, and the hidden

fragrance of flowers of love and comfort in secluded places; but the supreme solace of the soul is the realized consciousness of God Himself, disclosing Himself to us with a new wonder in the deep places of our experience. God, the Reality of Jesus, the gift of the Comforter, are no longer ideas to us in the vague unrest of life, they are "vital presences, larger if less precise, dearer if more unknown." God rests and stills us with the light and love of a perfect understanding. He gives us vision, patience and fortitude.

I begin to understand more fully and more deeply the affairs amid which my spirit confidently and courageously moves. I have a progressive sense of inner fulfilment amid all external conditions, and I hopefully abide on the brink of an eternal revelation amid all temporal experiences. In a deepening sense of life's enlarging boundaries a feeling of hot indignation sweeps over my spirit as I contemplate the counterfeits of comfort which are commonly presented to breaking hearts, even in the name of religion and under the sacred sign and symbol of faith. My whole soul rises in protest against falsehood applied to bleeding and wounded hearts, cults that torture sorrow, creeds that defile the pale, pleading face of death, and the futile and vain imaginations that deepen the sense of loneliness and desolation. There is no substitute for the Reality of God in the secret of man's soul, and there is no reality of consolation apart from the moral and spiritual splendour of life in intimate relation to the divine love and will. The Religion of Jesus is God's own protest in our human experience against false ideas, false emotions and false

fears. The sanctuary of Christ's sorrows transfigures the anguish of the heart. The victory of Christ's sufferings gives meaning to every grief, and the Way of the Cross imparts "a hope that maketh not *ashamed*." He gives the wings of the morning to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

There are two things that enter into all reality of comfort—emancipation from self, and the inner character of moral obedience. If God is to hasten to my need and fulfil within me His joy in the darkest hour of my experience, then my will and life must rest in the conditions of His Presence and fellowship. The selfishness of sorrow is its chief danger. We can drape the heavens and silence the song of the angels in our hearts by never getting beyond a self-centred grief. We can corrode any sorrow with the lusts and fears of our own self-interest. The soul that sits within its own shadows can find no liberty. Freedom from self is of the essence of fellowship with God, and the solace of the heart is its emancipation of the spirit. The last of all despairs is a sorrow wasted and centred upon itself. The consolations of God give us the key to a larger room. Comfort lies in the liberty of the spirit. The way of life lies upward and onward into light and interpretations.

"I pass the vale, I breast the steep.  
I bear the Cross, the Cross bears me.  
Light leads me on to light."

The Reality of Jesus never betrays the soul in the crisis of experience or in the surprises of suffering. There is only one open road to the liberty of the heart. It is the way of one-willedness and of complete obedience. Right in the centre of the words of Jesus

concerning the Comforter is set the reality of character. Within the solace of life there can lurk no moral or spiritual make-believe. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." In this there is no counterfeit. It grounds the comfort of life in the royalty and loyalty of the heart. To place it otherwise would deceive the heart at the centre of its grief. It would give to the desolation of the heart no meaning in the higher reaches of the soul nor interpretation in the abyss of circumstance.

Consolation is related to *character*, and the way of obedience is the only road to the highway of comfort. It becomes the glad way of the royal-hearted. It is the way of light when the darkness is overpassed. It is victory. The heroism of life in fellowship with God is the exact quality of divine comfort. The solace of life lies in its recreated moral and spiritual energy. The comfort and consolation of life is completed in the enrichment of character, and in the deepening of the soul-capacity for higher service. So comforted, the soul faithful to itself can afford to wait the larger and eternal revelation.



## XIX

### THE SERVICE

THE religion of Jesus is not a theory of life : it is its practice. It includes in its wisdom a moral ideal, a social order, a sound economic. There is no vital question for the well-being of the heart or of society that the religion of Jesus does not assist us to answer. Jesus contributes a transforming message to all life and to every relationship. His message is a saving and redeeming message. It passes beyond theory to living action. It has dynamic power, and this is what the wisdom of the world lacks. The secret of Jesus is a personal thing that conveys energy. He brings the personal capacities of the whole man into action. He possesses the power of an inner secret, the inner compulsion of which has power to transfigure character and to emerge in a serviceable action that has power to remould and refashion the world after the divine ideal. The words of Jesus are as seeds in the ground. The principles of Jesus are a life in the spring furrows of the ground. His wisdom, being sown, ripens to a harvest some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold. Men think and cherish dreams.

The world has no lack of Idealists and Pragmatists, but Jesus is supreme in His power to bring things to pass. It needs every power of mind and heart that

men possess to get the teaching, the principles and the saving life-energy of Jesus applied. After all the years of the manifestation of Jesus, men are still ineffective, both in the realization and application of the religion of Jesus. They have done almost everything with the Gospel except obey it in heart, in life and in society. They have this, however, to their credit : there is a feeling abroad as to reality, and a righteous demand is made that the religion of Jesus should have the opportunity given to it which it demands for itself, namely, that it should be obeyed, and its compulsions recognized in every department of life.

The world, to save itself, is sensitive to this demand, and history is on the threshold of a New Age, wherein the Reality of Jesus will be recognized in its authority, in its expansion and in its service. It has been remarked that "a world full of Shakespeares or millionaires would fatigue us." It is clear that a world of men possessing the genius, tone and temper of Jesus would be saved, enriched and made glad. Jesus is revolutionary in the spirit He imparts to the intention of the heart, to the relationships of life, and to the will to service. The religion of Jesus being a life-principle, where it exists, the fruits of service are inevitable. Spiritual realization cannot be held back from the reality of service.

It may be said, What is the practical use of dwelling with so much emphasis on the culture of the personal soul ? The real thing necessary is to get things done. Service is religion. There is fatal error here. The disease from which modern life suffers is the quantity of its activity without the quality of service. Religion is not service. Service is the fruit of religion. Activi-

ties without inner power are vain. I suppose Mr. Cotter Morison could explain himself, and assert that religion has been too much concerned with its inner self, and that the present need is the "Service of Man." He will not travel far along that road until he discovers the fact that a mere enthusiasm for humanity and a desire for organized external activities is worthless in the long run. Humanitarianism, social enthusiasms—all wilt and wither and die for lack of the inwardness of the soul. Reactions from mediævalism, experiments such as Comte's, may repeat themselves under various personal, social or economic guises. In a brief period they become spent forces, with this fatal result, that the religious love of experience becomes the more difficult to revive, and the reality of the fruits of service are the more distant from their goal of human betterment. In a personal and social sense the last state is worse than the first.

It may not be a popular saying, but it is all the more necessary. Service is not a substitute for religion, nor is it in itself religion. The modern need is spiritual revival at the core of things, and from the heart of love and righteousness the real service of God and humanity flows. Without religion the reservoirs of life are empty, and the service of man is a barren ideal and a fond hope. This is the canker at the core of mere political or economic socialism, and it is, also, the secret of much that spells failure in the feverish activity of efforts in the name of religion, where the reality of the religion of Jesus has ceased to function. It belongs to the Reality of Jesus that He placed first things first. His love of God gave passion to His love for men. His inner reality in God gave the energy to His final and



sacrificial service. His living service of men was a force to the uttermost, the harvest of which no malice, hate or strife of men could hinder. The Cross was the measure of His service. The power for this lay in the inwardness of love, righteousness, goodness and truth. The vitality and nerve of the service of humanity is the passion of the Love of God and the vision of humanity in God.

It is the attainment of this vision which gives the programme of service and fills in every detail with the compulsion and completeness of spiritual consecration and moral responsibility. The modern movement, however, towards the ideal and realization of service as the essential fruit of the reality of religion, is a true instinct and in the end will justify itself. The reaction against individualism in religion is healthy. If the religion of humanity is no substitute for the religion of Jesus, it is equally true that a religion of the heart which has no message for universal life and relationship is no true presentation of the Reality of Jesus. Any antithesis between the service of God and the service of man is false to the teaching of Jesus and unreal to the meaning, tone and temper of His whole life, which was the energy of God on behalf of men.

The religion of Jesus demands that we be loyal not only to His ideals but to His methods of realizing them. The Reality of Jesus works from within outwards, and we may not stay nor frustrate that working. Jesus lays down no rules as to the inspiration or limits of service. There is no mistaking the whole tenor of His life nor the final exhibition of His Cross. The law of love and service is final and ultimate. In one of His last acts of instruction Jesus was careful to leave no doubt in



men's minds as to the reality of His religion. "Jesus knowing that he came from God, and went to God, laid aside his garments and girded himself and washed the disciples' feet." Every verse and word of John's picture of Jesus here is pregnant with the instruction and responsibility of service.

The exposition is dramatic and intense. It is unforgettable and inevitable. Jesus was anxious that there should linger no mistake as to the supreme knowledge. "Know ye what I have done to you? I have given you an example. The servant is not greater than his lord. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them." Jesus roots service in the love and humility of personal consecration and in a mutual relationship that has no limit in its outreach of consecrated ministration. In the issue life is stripped naked of everything but the girding of the instrument of purity and service. It makes a mockery of self-complaisant Christianity and of debased forms of socialism, and consecrates personality to sanctified and complete service.

The social problem confronted Jesus, and it confronts us. Man is fundamentally a social being. His being and life is set in relationships. His religion is in essential relation to his collective life. The moral and spiritual task laid upon man is the realization of himself in a social order, rationally, morally and spiritually governed. In an industrial age these relationships of life and duty become more and more emphatic. Material factors emphasize them, and the conditions of life become more and more pregnant with the moral and spiritual issues of the social order and the complex relationships of industrial life.

The whole field of service is transformed. The sacredness of the personal soul in adverse environment calls for ministry. The relationships of life demand cleansing. Behind every curve and chart of effort the vision of the throbbing need of humanity is seen, demanding the utmost that the love of God and the righteousness of men can accomplish. It is not enough to cherish hopes and ideals. Every inertia, prejudice and selfishness stands condemned. The service of modern life lies in the effort to unloose every burden and to bring every capacity into the line of service, and to apply the ministry of the principles and energies of Jesus to every personal and social necessity. The Reality of Jesus seeks and awaits *embodiment* in the hearts of men and in the structure of society. Uninstructed enthusiasm will not bring to pass the desired cleansing. Mass movements inspired by class-consciousness and energized by hate will only emphasize evils and bring desolation. The secret of service will lie in the quickened personal and collective conscience, and the patient fulfilments of self-devotion to the highest ends in the personal spirit and the relationships, wherein love after the divine order heals the wounds of society and restores health to the total common life.

The cause of humanity is the cause of God, and the divine idea works to a sure fulfilment in the ideals and methods of Jesus. We do not serve here a universe of things and of forces; we serve the human heart and energize the human will. The duty must be approached with the sense of personality in men. This service can never be fulfilled until it is realized as *soul-service*, and the reality of the service of Jesus

is only seen and performed in the vision of an evangel for the needs of men. The reality of the service of the religion of Jesus is nothing less than the urgency of a gospel of salvation to the whole man and to the complex relationships of life. It becomes a personal responsibility for service in the life of all.

The ordinary tasks of life are consecrated. The whole business life of a community takes on the colour of a mutual service. No sphere is alien to the activity of the spiritual tone and temper of Jesus. Religion ceases to be departmental, or to be a concern isolated from life. It becomes a reality to be lived and a faith to be exercised every day, in every duty and in every linked relationship of labour, duty and joy. The whole aspect of personal and collective life is transformed by the spirit of mutual service and in an attitude of life where self-interest gives place to happy self-consecration. The harsh areas of common life and work become

"Gardens bright with sinuous rills  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree."

The whole garment and vesture of the common day and the duty of life needs to be transfigured by this increasing realization of the reality of religion and the transfusion of service. It is not open to any to say it is an ideal that is impracticable. It is the only real solution. It may appear to linger, but progress is not so slow as a superficial glance at the disturbed and antagonistic relationships of life would suggest. The forces of consecrated service are innumerable. The principles and energies of Jesus are at work in the world. The battle against selfishness is not endless



and hopeless. Love works in the world, and Jesus cleanses the springs of the heart and of society. The law of service has passed from the sanctuary and the cloister into the complex channels of the world's life.

The hope of the New Age lies in the new sensitiveness to the call to service. For the moment idealism seems confused amid the reactions of history and thought. The feeling after service moves amid blindness and ignorance. The inner heart is not sufficiently cleansed and illumined. The feet that should be swift in racing ministries are not clean and sanctified, but there is desire and hope and a first awakening.

As the reality of things in the issue becomes more clear, intelligent and well informed, service will find its objective and its joy. Human nature cannot divest itself of essential personality. Individualism and the rights of personality cannot be overridden, but personality can become sanctified and the individualism of life can be consecrated. Self-realization is seen not to consist in selfishness, but in self-devotedness. The highest for the personal life is discovered in the realization of love in its incoming and outgoing. He that giveth out his life finds it. A new temper and a new spirit animates the heart, and a new order of life emerges in a society cleansed at the source of life and united in a relationship of mutual responsibility that makes sweet the channels of man's endeavour.

The whole machinery of civilization is revolutionized by the new temper at the root of life and of man's activity. The Reality of Jesus enabled Him to see both the ideal of service and its manner of action. Jesus creates the inner spirit, and the mind and will



so animated possess both the power and the passion of service. Consecrated personality radiates action. Service becomes a part of the nature of the soul magnetized by Jesus. It is vain to expect attraction in a bar of pig-iron cast into the scrap heap, but let a bar of steel be magnetized and so placed in the midst, and it attracts and draws and unifies from the new nature imparted to it. The religion of Jesus casts spiritually magnetized personality into the chaos of life and society, and the action of service takes place according to the law of a new pervading life. Vital religion in action never becomes a spent force ; it is the life of God at work in and through human hearts and wills dedicated to service. The reality of the divine love (a love of active charity, using the word charity in its divine significance) never faileth. It is the heart of God cast into the midst of the common task. It is the soul of service born from within. It is the leaven that works, and the salt of service that purifies and preserves.

"The time of business," says Brother Lawrence, "does not differ with me from the time of prayer, and amid the rush and hurry of my kitchen, when different persons are at the same time crying out for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as when upon my knees at the Sacrament."

So service is realized in the spirit of Jesus. The organization of Jesus is never elaborate, but the service is always performed and perfected. By sea or synagogue, with the multitude or beside the individual, without monotony and without intermission, the life of service in Jesus never ceased. The ministry of healing and charity, mercy and love,

never faltered. Patience is never hurried, action never unduly urgent. The hour always waits for the serving soul, and the action is never untimely. Duty is seen. There is an intuition as to opportunity, and the power that is inward never faileth. Work is accomplished without friction. Activity is never substituted for the reality of energy. Virtue goes out from the consecrated heart. Such is the service of Jesus.

Modern activity is compromised for lack of His inner temper and outer consecration. In an outburst, as he views the futility of the feverish action of men, Frederic Amiel exclaims : " What glass screen has, as it were, interposed between me and the contact of things ? " It was his baser self. The contacts of Jesus establish the contacts of service, and the whole character and life take on a permanent attitude towards faith and work.

" Thou workest now as Thou didst then—  
Feeding the faint divine in humble men."

It rests with every man to preserve and increase within himself the subtle and fragrant power of service. It is the magnetism of divine love and the energy of intelligent holiness in everyday living. It is the action which reveals the Reality of God and manifests its perfection in the religion of Jesus. " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," is a revealing word as to the heart and action of Jesus. It is a consecrating word in the hearts of all men and women in the world to-day who are touched with the spirit and the mind of Christ.

The spirit of service which Jesus sends forth into humanity has been as a river in the centuries. It has

refreshed a thousand generations. That river of service is broadening out to-day, and on either side of the banks of that river are leaves for the healing of society and the nations. That river has its source beneath the throne of the divine love, and it finds its channel in pulsing, throbbing consecrated human hearts. It is the river of God's pleasure and purpose for the world, and *Jesus is alive in that world to-day*. He is the inspiration and divine source of its saving service. Jesus has definite means of healthy communication with men. It remains to give an attentive and unprejudiced study to the spiritual embodiment of God in the world. That there is such an embodiment of the Reality of Jesus in the world there can be no manner of doubt. The manner of the coming and action of Jesus in the world is God's testimony to Himself in the law of love and service. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the cross."

God works through Jesus in men, not merely as individuals but as bonded in the fellowship of the divine faith, life and action. The ideal and reality of the embodiment of Jesus in the world emerges. The Church is founded in Jesus and in the spirit and energy of service. The body is the instrument of the will, and the Church becomes the reality through which God in Christ Jesus works in the world. It was said of Jesus, "Wherefore when he cometh into the



world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body didst thou prepare for me." From Bethlehem to Joseph's tomb Jesus worked in an embodied humanity. It is then said of the Church, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." The significance of this is simple, yet profound. The fellowship of the faith and life of Jesus becomes the divine instrument in and for the redemption and renewal of humanity. "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold I make all things new." The divine life and action is at work in the world. God is engaged in a continuous and progressive renewing action. He works through the personality of men, bonded in the fellowship of Jesus. Amid every limitation the action works. It is in a present and continuous activity. The energy is in process of working. "Behold *I am making* all things new." This embodiment of Jesus is a present reality.

The ideal of the Church is not realized by reason of the blindness and infidelity of men, but the ideal and the reality exist, and fulfilment will in the end be accomplished and the service made adequate and complete. "There are diversities of workings, but the same God who worketh all things in all." The time will come amid all human frustration when Jesus shall behold this supreme instrument of service fulfilling itself in humanity. "That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word; that he might present the church to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

The ideal sadly lingers, but the law of love and service is supreme, and amid every penitential regret the



Church of God in the Reality of Jesus is the most efficient instrument for good in the world. The reality seeks realization. "MY DEAR COUSIN,"—wrote Erskine of Linlathen on the 6th September 1828—"Do you not feel that the Christianity of the present day is a very low thing, if indeed it is a thing at all, and not a mere set of words and forms? Our systems make God a mere bundle of doctrines, but He is the Great One with whom we have to do in everything. It seems to me that the great dislike for anything supernatural in religion at present arises just from this circumstance, that religion is for the most part a covert atheism, and there is a general shrinking from anything like an inclination that there is a Real Power and a Real Being at work around us whom we can neither comprehend nor guard against."

The same words might be used by us to-day with a new content of thought thrown into the word supernatural and a new emphasis laid on the law of service. On that altar of the reality of the Body of Jesus the world rests for the vision that is making all things new, and the New Age of modern men will neither run in vain nor labour in vain if it be offered on the sacrifice and service of that faith. Jesus lives in the world to-day.



## JESUS TO-DAY





## XX

### THE EMBODIMENT

GOD never had more on hand than in the world of to-day. Modern thought and life unveil themselves with an intensity amounting to violence. Men think and act to-day amid rapid developments and a changing fortune in things. The spirit of reality reveals itself in an attitude of challenge and even menace. Nothing is sacred from inquiry and nothing can abide without the justification of truth and the vindication of fact and experience. Amid personal perplexities, shifting phases of thought and opinion, changing institutions, social illusions and aspirations, men seek reality. The death-knell peals over waste places of tradition, prejudice, delusion and unreality. On the whole, the instinct for truth is healthy. Beneath all confusions the truth of ends is being worked out. In one sense, "there is no new thing under the sun." In another sense, all things become new, and "moreover, I saw under the sun in the place of judgment and in the place of righteousness that wickedness was there."

To say in the considered words of a man of science, "I have been meditating upon the condition of human progress and I have taken a general survey of all history from those wonderful new discoveries in Egypt, going back seven thousand years, to the present

day. I have come to the general conclusion that there has been no advance either in intellect or in morals from the days of the earliest Egyptians and Syrians down to the keel-laying of the latest Dreadnought," is to say what is not true. What may be true from the point of view of a mere materialistic evolution is not true in the reality of the God of history and of the spiritual and moral impulses at work in man. The Reality of God in men is not so disposed of. To be blind to this reality is to give the centuries the lie and to rob humanity of the nerve of progress.

We are called upon to judge and to estimate in the region of the total facts of man's personality and will. Vital adjustments of thought may not be easy, but the driving forces of life to-day are seen to be spiritual, and they are scientifically discerned. Nineteen centuries of the Reality of Jesus are not to be disposed of by a gesture of scorn unless a mind be wanton and the tone of thought blind and reckless. Indifference may ignore the reality. The inability and narrowness of mere departmental knowledge may content itself with the evasion of facts of spiritual and moral experience, but the soul of the world and of history cannot be passed by either in the insolence of scorn or the self-complacency of materialism.

The Reality of God and the Religion of Jesus take definite form and substance in the history and experience of men. Embodiment may seem an unwieldy word, but it expresses the Reality of Jesus in what men have termed the Church. "The church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The Church of God has been the greatest fact in the centuries of man's progress. It remains to-day, when all is said

and done, the greatest moral, spiritual and social force in the world ; and whatever changes may come as to its external manifestation, it moves into the future with both grip and hold on the issues of history and life.

For the moment the word Church seems to have fallen on evil days. The idea it conveys has lost both definiteness and exaltation. On the one hand it has been perverted and exaggerated, and on the other neglected and misinterpreted. To some it is an ideal conception with invisibility as its note ; to others it is a state, or social or political organization, that has ceased to have any function or interest. To Jesus it was a supreme reality which He described as His own special possession in the world—*My Church*.

It is of advantage to re-emphasize the worth and value of the Church as Jesus viewed it in order to understand how precious and definite a reality it is. It is scarcely sufficiently considered that so clear and precise an institution is the Church that the very same words are used as to Christ's action in relation to the individual and to the collective fellowship. " He loved me, and gave himself for me." " He loved the Church, and gave Himself for the Church."

A little quiet reflection on this will give pause to such as sum up the gospel and the death of Christ as an individualistic gospel, or to such as pass wanton criticism on the Church itself. Amid all its divisions, limitations and human failure, it is the corporate and vital thing in men that Jesus saw and considered worth dying for. One would not readily suppose that this Embodiment of His spirit, will and service in human hearts and human history was some kind of a society



to arise in some fortuitous way after His death, a thing at the hazard of man's fortune, to realize ideals of a kingdom of heaven upon earth ; or that it was some company of individuals who would come together to worship and discuss among themselves their well-intentioned ideas as to human culture and social betterment ; or that Jesus lived and died in order to perpetuate a sacerdotal cult organized and governed by a body of priests dispensing divine mysteries by means of mechanical and materialized sacraments, and enslaving men with the fears of the future life and the penalties of a materialized hell.

We say, one would not readily suppose that ideas such as these would express the divine Embodiment of love, truth and life in the world. The Church reaches us as an historic fact, and a review of the fact illumines both the ideal and its perversion or limitation.

The first clearing of the conception of the Church is a simple examination of the mind of Jesus Himself with regard to it. That He attached importance to the clear understanding of it is seen in His instruction of the first disciples.

Since the Church is created in the Reality of Jesus Himself and has its foundations in His person and work, He demands at the outset a definite acknowledgment as to Himself. "Whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Each disciple within hearing understood what "the Christ" meant both as to claims and authority and mission. "The Christ, the Son of the living God," had distinct significance for them. The ideal was embedded in the hope of their race and their religion. It lay with the future disclosure of trans-



endent events to put the fulness of interpretation and meaning into the confession of the reality and person of Jesus. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Jesus is speaking in the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, near to the vast ruins of the ancient city of Baalbec, and amid some of the finest rock scenery in the world. Within sight of Cæsarea was the great citadel of Subei-beh, founded on a piece of living rock and built of quarried stone. In this context, the confession of the person of Jesus, and amid these surroundings, the instruction of Jesus, proceeds as to the Church. "And I also say unto thee thou art Petros" (a piece of rock or a quarried stone), "and upon this petra" (the feminine form of the word, expressing the living rock from which fragments are quarried, the source from which stones are cut out) "I will build MY Church." The instruction is symbolical and vivid; it is simple and clear. Jesus is the living foundation of the Church. His reality and personality creates it. The structure is continued by the incorporation of human personality created in Christ, the Son of the living God, and bonded in structured fellowship with Him. Peter himself was in no doubt as to the instruction, and in after days, when the death and resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit in the actual experience of men disclosed what the Vital Embodiment was, he wrote concerning the vivid reality of the Church:—

"Unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God

through Jesus Christ." And then, with a profound vision as to the Church in past times and in the ages to come, he roots the whole reality in history: "Because it is contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.' To you therefore that believe is the preciousness, but for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner."

It is too late in the day to suggest that this saying of Jesus is not authoritative or that the man Peter to whom it was definitely spoken misunderstood either His relation to the Church or the reality in which both he himself and the Church stood. The Church is not founded in apostles. It is not founded in faith. Faith is the principle by which it is related to Christ and also by which the relationship of the fellowship is maintained in itself. It is a unity, organic, vital, sanctified, visible, the catholic Embodiment of Jesus in the world. It is a reality founded and continued in the Reality of Jesus. It is the divine order of character and service "called out" from the world to express the mind and will, the holiness and righteousness of God in humanity, as Jesus expressed it in personality and power.

It is not to be confounded with the kingdom of God in the world. It is the instrument by which the reign of God among men is to be brought to pass. Its inner life in Jesus gives it the power in freedom of organization, government, polity and service to fulfil the mind and will of God toward the world.

It is not a mere fellowship of the totality of believers; much less is it a series of groups confessing Jesus in a variety of ways, separate and isolated. It

is not something created by a voluntary agreement among spiritual men, nor a society of well-intentioned souls. It is created by Christ. It is energized by Christ. It is His Embodiment in the world, an organism possessing His life, and not merely an organization aiming at the ideals of Jesus. Jesus gives the *organism* life. The life shapes itself. Jesus left no narrow instructions as to government and polity. At the first glance this seems to be a defect, ending in division, strife and schism. On a deeper study the nature of the inner reality is clearly seen.

The preservation of the spiritual liberty of the Church is seen to be essential to her faith, service and progress. It may seem to some that Jesus would have saved the Church from a considerable amount of trouble and conflict if He had made it clear, or if the subsequent apostolic history had made it evident, that "the historic Episcopate" was the divinely commissioned order. Such a surmise only shows that Jesus was careful to trust the inner life of the Church to express itself in a vital catholicity rather than in a narrow and parochial exclusiveness. The Embodiment of Jesus in the world is founded in spiritual freedom and democratic life. The issue will declare the wisdom of Jesus when the Church has survived her limitations, the imprisonments of Constantine, the conceptions of mediævalism, the corruptions of a priest cult, the vagaries of individualism, and passes into a modern world of emancipated ideals, consecrations and service. The Church did not "begin in a clergy," and it will not end in a discussion as to bishops and sacraments. It began in the life-energy of Jesus, working through the Word, the sacraments and prayer,



calling men out of the world into the service of love, brotherhood and righteousness in the earth.

This is the divine idea and life manifested in the first records of the Church in the Acts of Apostles ; it is the divine fact for which St. Paul lived and died, the body of Christ, the household of God, the brotherhood. The Church in Jesus becomes the energy and grace that changes the spirit and temper of the world into the spirit and the mind of Jesus. This energy works in the corporate life of the Church. It shows men the Way, the Reality and the Life.

It is quick with vitality. The living power of Jesus works in it. The authority of Jesus governs it. It startles the world with the fact of humanity realized in God. It is endowed with self-government from within, and exercises of inherent right its authority as constituted in "the Headship of Christ" with supremacy in things spiritual. Its spiritual liberties are part of its exercise of life. It is endowed by Jesus Himself with a valid ministry. It stands in one sole commission—the commission of the Gospel. It lives by the Word and in the proclamation of the Word. Its two essential sacraments are rightly administered and its spiritual discipline duly exercised. The Word of God and the faith of men are the sole essence of the Church. The energy of Jesus, the divine faith, inspires and pervades its life, not after the manner of a mechanically imparted grace, but after the power of an endless and sanctifying life. Its union with Jesus is its guarantee of reality.

It deals with realities and exercises its functions in the power of a universal priesthood and not in the externals of a priest cult claiming magical powers



through an artificial system of hierarchical government. Its worship centres round the altar of Jesus, and the reality of its communion with God is maintained by the Living Presence of Jesus in the Word, sacraments and prayer. It possesses every ancient note that distinguishes its historic, visible and experienced life. Its supreme office is to maintain the witness to the fact of Jesus in holiness, unity, catholicity and continuity. It rests in the sure and stable certainty of the emancipating Gospel of the Grace of God. Its fundamental vocation is union with Jesus in the service of men. It "calls men out" of the world and constitutes a new humanity in the divine fellowship. It manifests in men and through men the divine purpose of love in action. The Church will move onward into the service of a new day when it is filled with the joyful sense that pervades the New Testament history of salvation and service.

No problem of the heart or of society is alien to its grace and ministry. It seeks the total realization of the divine life in men, in institutions, and in the total order of the common life. The effort to graft mediæval piety on to modern socialism will be seen to be futile, but the Reality of Jesus will be comprehended and applied to modern life with a new energy and with a new recognition of the vitality of life that abides in "the pillar and the ground of truth." Handling the heritage of experience, cherishing all that is true, noble and free in the past, learning amid present difficulties, and instructed by past failures, the Embodiment of Jesus in men undertakes the task of bringing men into holy fellowship with God and with each other. This is the fellowship of faith and love that

understands the secret of Jesus in the Holy Catholic Church. It is not constituted in a brotherhood born from beneath, nor can it be a worldly church bent on its own political or social ends, but it is the reality of the Embodiment of Jesus, the sharing of joyful life, caught up into the unity of God and enriched with the newborn life from above. It lives in the love of God, in a contributing and distributing life (*κοινωνία*), the sharing of the divine love and grace, the imparting, the giving and the receiving of an interchange of life sanctified at its source. It acts through the diversity of many gifts in the unity of the one spirit of love, truth and righteousness.

This is the fellowship created by the reality and religion of Jesus. It is a church dedicated in humanity to the sacrificial life of God. The Cup that we bless, is it not the fellowship (*ἡ κοινωνία*) of the Blood of Christ? The Bread that we break, is it not the fellowship (*κοινωνία*) of the Body of Christ? It is the interchange of life and grace at its source and redeeming the world from its sin, its selfishness, its worldliness and its lust. It is the divine charity, the active love of God realized and served in the hearts and institutions of men. This interchange of service is complete in the Embodiment of Jesus. "Each ready to impart" (*εὐμεταδότους*), "all willing to communicate" (*κοινωνικούς*). Here we are at the core of the unity and action of the Church Catholic. "So we being many are *one loaf*." Humanity is sanctified and saved in all its relationships through the reality and unity of Jesus in the life of the Church.

The antagonisms to fulfilment are continuous. The vision, however, of "My Church" is fulfilled.

The traffic of the world through the gateways of hostility does not defeat it. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It has an eternal significance. The vision of the Church is not exhausted in the mere temporal outlook. Its fulfilments transcend the temporal and present action. It stands in possession of the gateway of death. It gives to humanity not merely duty but destiny. The Church militant is united with the Church triumphant. It redeems humanity unto the eternal hope and service. It is a catholic unity transcending time, and it moves in every age under the impulse of a heavenly witness. The heroism of the faith of the past is joined to issues in the present. The temporal witness of the Church is cheered on by those who have won through in faith and service. "We are encompassed by a great cloud of encouraging witnesses."

This Embodiment of Jesus passes into every new age with the certainties of final conquest. It has a sure commission in the Author and Finisher of its faith—a faith in God and a faith with regard to men—the faith of the Reality of Jesus. "And these all, having had witness borne to them through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." The Church of the living God goes forward to a great issue in a sure leadership.

## XXI

### THE LEADERSHIP

THE Reality of God is in continuous action. God is immanent in the world, in history, and in the hearts of men. God acts in and through Jesus. Jesus is the Saviour and Leader of humanity. He is the supreme authority and living energy of His embodiment in men—the Church. It is not sufficiently realized how far-reaching a thought this is, or how rooted it is in the energy of God both in His mediate and immediate action. One of the most penetrating and practical intellects the race of man has produced exhausts the resources of language in the effort to convey this idea as a living fact. So urgent is the language that it takes the form of a prayer that man might understand and see both the origin and the sweep of the authority and living leadership of Jesus. “I make mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you a spirit of wisdom (σοφίας) and unveiling (ἀποκάλυψεως) consisting in (ἐν) the discernment as a discovery in the actual finding (ἐπιγνώσει) of himself (αὐτοῦ), having the eyes of your heart enlightened (πεφωτισμένους, seeing a thing with increasing visibility in a clear light and shedding light) so that you may see with a clear understanding (εἰδέναι) the hope



to which he calls us, the wealth of his glorious possession in the saints and the surpassing greatness of his power (*δυνάμεις*) entering into and on behalf of (*εἰς*) those who believe, according to the operating energy (*ἐνέργειαν*) of the strength (*κράτους*) of the absolute might (*ἰσχύος*) which he exerted (*ἐνήργησεν*) in raising Christ from the dead, seating him at his right hand in the sphere of spiritual activities (*ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*), far above all kingly or magisterial rule (*ἀρχῆς*) and moral authority (*ἐξουσίας*) and physical force (*δυνάμεις*) and hierarchical lordship (*κυριότητος*) and every name that is to be named, not only in this age but in the age to come; and he put all things in obedience under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body (*σῶμα*, the human instrument and embodiment), the fulness of him who fills the universe of all things (*τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι πληρουμένου*).” This is the unrivalled effort of words to express and to expound the completeness, the range, and the absoluteness of the authority and leadership of Jesus. We can neither add to it nor take from it. The fact is exhibited for the discernment and homage of faith and love.

It remains to inquire how the authority and leadership of Jesus works out in the field of history and the actual experience of men. When God acts for men He acts through and in men. The working is under the limitation of man’s constitution, will and knowledge. The action must be a free action carrying with it man’s intention and consent and service. It is a personal action. It cannot, therefore, be a mechanical action or an overriding coercion. The Church emerges in the revelation of this personal action. It includes the

apprehension of the mind of Jesus and the effort after the reproduction of that mind and will in the heart and in the society. Jesus rules and leads from the throne of the universe, *whither He has borne humanity* to the right hand of God. He has not passed out from humanity. He has in sacrificial life, death, and risen and ascended power won through to the sovereignty that reigns in it and for it. The Church takes life in the witness to this fact. It is created in the Reality of Jesus the Christ, and in the Word of His life, authority and power in men. He lives, He saves, He rules, He leads.

The Church takes life in this fact, and it is maintained in its realization and experience. We are not here in a region of speculation or of mythology. The history of the Church is its own evidence, and the record is in the events. Before His death Jesus gave instruction to His disciples as to their future leadership. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." "He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you." He indicated that the Church would come into its fullest life in the proclamation of the facts of His authority and action. "Ye are witnesses of these things, and behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high."

One of His final and symbolic earthly acts was to breathe upon the disciples, saying: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." In an intimate and tender forecast as to the future and its trial, He said: "The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say."

The method and manner of the Church's authority and leadership is here sufficiently indicated. It remained for experience to verify it. The future history of the Church was the verification of this reality of the Spirit of God.

The idea of the Spirit of God is not new. In a general way it was familiar. The Spirit of God was the term used for the action of God. His action in creation was so described. By the Spirit of God are the heavens garnished. The very meaning of the word suggested its action—the Breath, the Vivifying Energy, the Life. It is used to indicate the possession of special gifts and aptitudes in men. It was the source of special skill in handicraft or in momentous action. It was the special gift of prophets and spiritual leaders. It was man's recognition of the universal immanence of God. It was the realization of the fact of the divine life in the world of things and of men. It lies behind the interpretation of all life, and was an intuitive thought in man's imagination and heart. It is found in the elements of crude and primitive culture, and reveals itself in a progressive clearness as thought develops.

This general idea, however, is not the note of the New Testament experience. When this stage is reached something much more definite is manifested. God in action and in definite relation to *personality* reveals the mediate action of the Personal Spirit of God in contact with the personal mind and will of man. It is the *personal* experience of the *Personal* Spirit that comes into action. In regard to Jesus Himself in His earthly activity this is expressly stated. It is to the action of the Personal Spirit that the forma-



tion of the humanity of Jesus is ascribed, and the Spirit rested upon Him for His whole earthly ministry. His whole career of saving beneficence is thus stated: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good and healing." The crown of all His work, His self-offering on the cross, is placed in the same relationship and wedded to the same energy. "He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God." And we are told His resurrection took place "according to the Spirit of Holiness." There is a profound significance in all this in view of the after history and experience of the Church. The fact of the authority and leadership of Jesus is seen in its reality and relationship. The record of the "Acts of the Apostles" is not received in isolation. Pentecost is seen as the action of Jesus in and through the Personal Spirit of God in the heart and mind and will of men. Jesus leads and acts in the Church through the Personal Spirit of God, that acted in Himself when on earth, and which, through Him, takes action in men both individually and collectively. In this action the life of the Church begins, and in this action it is maintained and continued.

Jesus governs and leads His Church through the action of the Personal Spirit of God in the personality of men. The action of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord, is a definite and indwelling action. The first experience of the Church was the sense of joy and liberty in the realized action of the Risen Lord in the power of the received and indwelling Presence of the Spirit. In the first realization there are some elements that are not per-



manent. These elements belong to the man-ward side of human personality in the emotional experience of religion. The situation reveals the overpowering effect of the actual realization of the Reality of Jesus as Saviour and Lord and in the sense of liberty and grace experienced in the divine action. Jesus was in actual possession of men in the gift of the Holy Spirit. The fact rested in the experience. The psychology of human personality accounts for manifestations that were not of permanent value. They belong to the emotional expression of religious feeling and experience when it is not under adequate control of the mind and of the will. As has been well said, "the ethical worth of religious phenomena depends on the ethical worth of the religion rather than on the psychological nature of the phenomena."

Human personality, when quickened to its depths, reveals survivals and excesses that do not belong to the reality of moral and spiritual values. In the issue the unprofitable passes and the reality abides. If anything *unreal* is identified with the work of the Holy Spirit, and much that is unreal has been identified with it in the history of the Church and in so-called religious experiences, we are called upon to discern and to dismiss it. Man's spiritual experience is to be tested whether it is of God. "If any are zealous of spiritual gifts, let them seek that they may abound unto the edifying of the Church." "Everything is to be done unto edifying." The mind of Christ, and we have that mind, is the standard of value concerning every phase of religious experience. In the Early Church only the elements of permanent value survived.

These permanent elements are the energies through which Jesus works and leads now. No part of the personal life or of the organized life of the Church is outside the range of the Holy Spirit's activity. He acts through the reason and the will of men. He originates the spiritual life in the heart. He works in the conversion and sanctification of men. He inspires prayer and consecrates service. He instructs, He comforts. He makes the body the temple of God's indwelling. He instructs the mind in the region of inquiry and knowledge. He is the Spirit of Truth. He braces the will and confirms the character of action in goodness of heart. He gives holy quietude and establishes the heart in communion with God. He sustains faith in adverse circumstances, and holds the whole life to its goal. The government and leadership of Jesus begins with the individual and the personal life, but it passes through persons into a collective fellowship that constitutes the Church.

As the idea of the organized life of the Church unfolds itself, the action of Jesus through the Spirit manifests itself in the corporate life of the spiritual society. He endows and sanctifies its ministry. He guides its councils. He gives authority to its decisions. He opens the way to expansion and missionary activity. He sustains the Church under persecution and adversity. He seals the "Word of the Gospel" in its witness to Christ, and directs the "oversight" of the Church in the pastoral office. He works out the mind of Christ amid all human limitations and confusions. His action is continuous within the Church and in relation to the world forces and institutions amid which the Church is called upon to act.

World forces are disintegrated and hostilities are discovered, and in the long run unmasked and defeated. All this He effects in and through the personality of man and according to the promise, authority and leadership of Jesus. "Nevertheless I tell you of the reality. It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Paraclete will not come unto you; but if I go I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment."

It is clear that in all this action there is nothing artificial. Jesus leads through personality in contact with Himself. The Church is not anything apart from the personalities composing it. The Church of God has His Spirit through the personalities that compose it and constitute it. "The idea that the Church is itself an entity independent of its membership, and that its members have the Spirit because the Church has it, is a fiction which it is impossible to take as reality so long as we keep Paul's figure of the 'Body the Church,' where he himself keeps it, in the realm of illustration. The Church as the repository of the Spirit is a Greek notion which rests on Platonic idealism, and finds no sanction in Paul's theology. He knows of no Spirit-filled substance called the Church, but only of Spirit-filled persons, who together make up the Church."

The Spirit is the sum of all divine and spiritual influences acting upon and in the personalities of men. He acts rationally and in freedom. He makes effective the revelation of the life of Jesus. God does not act in relation to men in an impersonal way. "We have the mind of Christ" in and "through the Holy Spirit."



In that single phrase all is said, and in the New Testament action the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. The terms are used interchangeably. There is no immediate operation of the Spirit of God apart from the authority and leadership of Jesus. The Church is always saved here from falling into an obscure mysticism or a false enthusiasm of feeling. The faith of the Church is faith in Jesus, and because in the exercise of faith we have personally to do with the personal God, we must retain a clear and definite idea of the relationship to Jesus, so that no essential element of the faith process suffers damage. In every experience of the action of the Spirit of Christ we retain a personal grip upon both the realities of faith and of life. The action of the Spirit is never separate from the authoritative action of Jesus, nor cut loose from the historical revelation of God in Jesus and in the experience of the Church. The personal relation to the Church depends on the personal relation to Jesus, and not otherwise. It is by this relation and the communication of this grace that the Church lives, and it is to this personal and collective end that the Holy Spirit operates.

The Word, the Sacraments, the prayer and service of the Church are for this reason not mysteries nor mechanical operations but the action of grace in the vital "Body of Jesus." By this vital action the energies of the Church are concentrated on saving and redeeming purposes. Its service is fulfilled in moral responsibility, in spiritual reality, and in ethical power. The Church operates thus in the midst of the institutions and nations of men to fulfil the saving and redeeming work of Jesus. It gives witness to the Gospel of Salvation and carries out the World-Mission



of Jesus in the reality of His authority and His continuous leadership and life. It possesses His life in divine action and claims to exercise that life in the self-determination, authority and liberty of the Holy Catholic Church of God.

This is a supreme and divine reality in the world, the Spirit-endowed instrument by which the reign of God is to be established on the earth and His purpose of love and righteousness fulfilled in the hearts of men, in the relationships of society, and in the soul of the nations. Jesus has many things to say to that Church to-day, both for admonition and counsel. He is giving a distinct leadership, and in the inner secret of her own heart the Church knows it. The tears of penitence are in her eyes, and a new resolution of unity and service is forming in her mind and will ; she is gathering to herself a new strength for the obedience to the heavenly vision to which the New Age is calling her. The divine love and action in the world is not frustrated by the unfaithfulness of men. Beneath all confusions there is a new awakening in the earth. The Reality of Jesus lives and works and leads. " And I saw a new heaven and a new earth ; and I heard a voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." It is the " Presence " that vitalizes the Church, and puts her in commission for the conquest of the whole world and the reconstruction of the personal and social life according to the mind and leadership of Jesus.

## XXII

### THE KINGDOM

THE "Church of God" and the "Kingdom of God" are not terms that express the same idea. Nothing but confusion, misunderstanding and cross-purposes in thought can result from the attempt to identify the Church with the Kingdom. The Church is not something in contrast to the Kingdom, neither is the Kingdom some larger and more spiritual conception than the Church. There is neither identity nor contrast in the reality which both terms convey. To say that Jesus in the Gospels is wholly concerned as to the Kingdom and practically indifferent to the Church is simply to make a crude statement both with regard to the Gospels and with regard to the reality and personality of Jesus in His complete teaching, mission and finished work. This kind of reference is somewhat similar to the criticism of Jesus as a moral and spiritual expert in leaving so much unexpressed in the Gospels as to the ethics of society, citizenship and public life. Both references deal with the teaching of Jesus under the limitations of His earthly ministry and leave out of account His ever continuous and progressive revelation of Himself in the Church for the fullest ends of the reign of God on the earth.

The Church comes into its fullest exhibition after the

earthly ministry was accomplished and the Church established in the facts of the Gospel. The Church becomes the instrument for the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God as Jesus revealed it. There is neither identity nor antagonism in the two realities—they fulfil each other in the sovereignty of Jesus.

The Church rightly conceived is the visible instrument of the Kingdom in the field of history and the experience of men. Jesus, to the mockery of the Jews, died as a King. He did not die for a metaphor of Pilate. He is a King and His Kingdom has reality and He is supremely the King and Head of His Church, that the Kingdom may come.

There were two dramatic scenes as the earthly day closed in on Jesus. One was the challenging interview with Pilate, dismissed in a sentence or two, but making a picture of surpassing intensity and as memorable as a canvas depicting an epoch. The drama culminates in tumult round a King. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world." "Pilate said, Art thou a king then?" "To this end was I born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I might bear witness to Reality." "Pilate said, What is Reality?"

In this lay the challenge of forces, and the Kingship and the Kingdom remained with Jesus. It does not take more than average spiritual imagination to fill in the import of this challenging encounter as to the reality of forces that govern the world, nor to interpret the emphasis the Gospels place on the tumult around the sovereignty of Jesus.

The other scene is that of Jesus in the acute encounter with regard to His Messianic consciousness and claims. "And the high priest said, I adjure thee by the living

God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ." The answer of Jesus was significant. He answered in terms of the background of the ideal and the expectation in the question. The answer is symbolical in its terms of express purpose. It is definite and positive and final in terms of the priest's own ideals as to Messianic sovereignty, and there was "no need of further witness." Not merely here but elsewhere Jesus asserts His Messianic sovereignty and vision of the Kingdom of God in apocalyptic language. His use of apocalyptic expression is an inevitable part of the substance of the Gospels in view of cotemporary thought and expression. Jesus does not use it as if He were "a religious genius wrought to so high a pitch of enthusiasm as that the Real is lost sight of in the Ideal." Its use was purposeful and appropriate to the challenges presented by both an unreal ideal of the Kingdom of God in cotemporary Judaism and a current popular symbolism and language to express that Kingdom and its expectation. The use of apocalyptic language by Jesus asserted in plain terms to His day His Messianic claims, but in its use He preserved inviolate the ideals and principles of the real Kingdom of God and the nature and manner of its universal sovereignty in the hearts of men. The extremely difficult task lay upon Jesus of asserting His Messianic sovereignty in terms of current thought, and yet to transform the whole current of thought and expectation as to the nature and design of the Reign of God in the world. His use of apocalyptic is not to be evaded. Neither is it to be over-emphasized. It is to be interpreted in the light of His personal disclosure of Himself, and of His plain teaching in language which



was not apocalyptic, in Word, in Parable and in the Private Instruction given to disciples as He conducted them along the difficult pathway of the new truth concerning the Kingdom which His whole life and final Cross and Resurrection disclosed.

It also remained for the future history of the Church to reveal the living content of His teaching both as to the present Kingdom and as to what is termed the Parousia Prediction and the doctrine of "Last Things." Amid all difficulty as to expression and the false ideals of His times Jesus is true to Himself and to the future. The Kingdom of God for Jesus was not merely some future and final sovereign action; it was a present Reality. It was a transforming sovereignty in the heart and in society. "Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you and in the midst of you." It was the rule of God in the soul, to be accepted in the spirit and obedience of a child. It was as a seed in the ground, growing silently and at first unseen, and finally, from the smallest of beginnings, becoming a universal shelter, as a great tree in which the birds of the air find welcome and shelter. It was intensive and transforming in its inner and hidden life, as if "a woman took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal until it was all leavened." It was as if a man discovering its surpassing value sold all that he had to come by this pearl of the heart and mind and will. It was as if men were taken unawares for lack of the prudence of life and opportunity, and found themselves without the door, as foolish bridesmaids crying out in the exclusion of the darkness and the night.

The Kingdom of God, according to the Reality of Jesus, was the rule of God in the hearts of men. It

was the happiness of the "humble in spirit," of "the pure in heart," and of such as "suffered for righteousness' sake." It was the experience of those who received Jesus Himself into their soul and conscience, and were born again into a new world of love, righteousness and peace. This was the Kingdom of God in the heart, and it is the first note of the public voice of Jesus in the world. "Then came Jesus into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." The call is addressed to the individual, to the society, and to the nation. The Kingdom is personal and collective in its significance. The rule of God is intended to be a sovereignty in the soul and in the total relationships of the common life. It is co-extensive with civilization and the progress of humanity.

It is of supreme importance for men to comprehend the nature, manner and method of the Kingdom. The task is laid on Jesus to disclose this, and the Reality of Jesus has unfolded this revelation in terms of personal human experience and in the progressive life of history and event. This task is accomplished in a preliminary way in the difficult work of Jesus in instructing and disciplining the first disciples in new and transforming ideas and ideals. The task is further accomplished in the *reign of Jesus from the throne and in His sovereign leadership of the Church*. The Invisible King bears a continuous witness in the realm of Reality, and the Kingdom is a progressive experience of realized truth and service in history. Pilate's question receives its answer in the Reality of Jesus in His continuous and progressive action. The challenge of the

judgment hall of the Priest passes into a world-encounter for the supremacy of spiritual forces, whereby the reign of God is established in the earth and in the hearts of men. It becomes the task of the living Church to make this rule absolute and universal. The content of the teaching of both apocalyptic and parable is definitely and progressively unfolded. The vision and service of the Kingdom enlarges both in extension and intensity. The Kingdom comes through spiritual forces. The King comes. He is continuously coming in the leadership and gift of the Spirit, and He will finally come in the discernment and victory of the forces of love, truth and righteousness.

It is necessary to make clear this manner, method and conquest of the rule of God in humanity. In times of stress and trial there is a constant recurrence to inferior views of the Kingdom and of unreal enthusiasms. The vision of the Kingdom is materialized and there is the recurrence of emphasis on apocalyptic language in local and earthly conceptions of the advent of Jesus. These take the place of faith in the reality and function of spiritual action. Faith in the working of the sovereign forces of God is weak, when spiritual forces are not seen and realized as actual. The Kingdom is wholly spiritual and moral in its action. It is all the more real because it is so ; spiritual forces act from the heart and centre of life. This is the manner and method of the Reality of Jesus, and it is the essential nature of the Kingdom of God among men and of its coming.

The Gospels record the subtle temptation to think or believe otherwise. It belongs to the Reality of Jesus that we are permitted to see the strength of



this temptation in the consciousness of Jesus Himself. The account of His temptation before entering on the public ministry that proclaimed the Kingdom makes this clear. The essence of that temptation was the substitution of world forces for spiritual forces. Jesus dismissed the temptation in a variety of forms. There was no short cut to sovereignty. The reign of God acts through the rule of spiritual and moral forces acting from within and laying hold on the personal heart and institutions of men. The after-instruction of disciples was difficult, but both word and event in contact with Jesus lead them into the witness for the Kingdom in the reality of the truth. We see the same process in the instruction of the Church. It has been a long and difficult task. It has not, even yet, been fully accomplished. The Church still awaits emancipation from lower ideals and from dependence on world forces for the accomplishment of her mission and the establishment of the Kingdom of God among men. She still needs instruction as to her intention of love, goodness, righteousness and truth. She requires more assurance in the use of the spiritual forces she exerts, and a more obedient confidence in the reality she possesses for the bringing about of the work she has in hand of establishing the universal reign of God in the character, conduct and relationships of men. She requires to maintain in herself what Jesus maintained in Himself, namely, confidence in the witness to reality and truth to the death. Neither the challenge of the politician nor the priest should withdraw her from this, and the realization of the sovereign spiritual forces at her disposal. Her temptation is always with her. Her moral and spiritual loyalty is



her only safeguard. The greatest hindrance to the Kingdom of God is *debasement and worldliness in the Church herself*. It clouds her vision and paralyses her service.

The Kingdom cometh not with observation. Therefore spiritual reality and moral trustworthiness are the only basis of progress. Therefore says the Reality of Jesus, "Ye play-actors, ye can discern the face of the sky, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." In spite of all, the King comes. The context of His teaching both in apocalyptic and in parable finds interpretation in history and in the progressive experience of men. The seed grows and the leaven works. A living Church realizes new truth and undertakes new responsibilities and new service. The kingdom of truth is a growing thing and gathers to itself the verified results of all knowledge. The kingdom of service is an enlarging thing and calls into activity the appropriate action for enriched opportunity. The King acts continuously, and the boundaries of His Kingdom have no limits. A *progressive Church* is the instrument of the expanding Kingdom. "No man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment, for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made. Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins : else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish : but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved."

The modern world of thought and action needs to realize the extent of the application of the Gospel of the Kingdom. The reign of God falls to be applied to every department of man's liberty, action, relation-

ship and responsibility. The Reality of Jesus is required to take personal and universal action. A social Gospel is no substitute for the "Good Tidings" of a personal redemption. The vision of the Kingdom comes to the soul born into a new life of faith and service. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God," but once he does see it, he cannot realize it in a self-centred delusive piety. He becomes a son of God in a kingdom for the realization of personal and social righteousness. "Humanity for God" as a mere ideal is barren of any dynamic force. Humanitarianism is an abject failure, but the Reality of Jesus in the soul is an energy reaching out to humanity in God. The world is not saved by benevolent sentiment but by sacrificial life.

The King has blood upon His garments and a sword upon His thigh. The saving service for social betterment finds its secret at the heart of personal character and consecration. "As between the millionaires and the martyrs, we can find no sort of guidance through life at all on mere principles of beneficence." The Kingdom comes in the heart born anew. It is the life of God, of love and of righteousness at the core of society, at the centre of civilization, and in the soul of industry. The Gospel of the Kingdom goes to the heart and core of every policy and institution. It creates a new life in humanity. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born anew." This is no easy gospel. The way of the Kingdom is intense and searching. The supreme thing about it is that it is successful. Modern men wonder at hindrances and delays. They become

*impatient with reality.* Their ears are toward the ground. They are listening for earthly things and not for heavenly things to be applied to earth. The disease of modern idealism is its lack of spiritual reality. The futility of modern effort is its lack of spiritual dynamic. We have arrived, said Mazzini, at one of those supreme moments in "which one world is destroyed, and another is created." At such a moment the prayer of Jesus becomes the programme of faith and service. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth."

The world waits for the obedience to the laws of that Kingdom whose foundations are love, justice and righteousness. For the moment humanity needs defence from both pietist and secularist; from both institutional religion and social egotism; from both theologian and scientist, and from the things that profane the name of truth and brotherhood. There is a vast amount of floating idealism in the air. There is a blundering kind of faith seeking it scarce knows what. The need is bedrock reality and the crucifixion of sin and selfishness and worldly lust. The Kingdom of God is in view, but it is but dimly discerned either as to its reality or its scope. The dust of confusion, violence and conflict hazes the vision. Men are distracted when they ought to be resolute; perplexed when they ought to be confident; inert when they ought to be active. The world of thought and feeling and culture is passing through a kind of Gethsemane, and amid the convulsions of the kingdoms of this world there remains no secure sense of the reign of God in the earth.

The New Age awaits its baptism and reconstruction.

Its greatest task lies ahead of it. It requires to re-create itself from within. Thought needs transfiguration with the mind of Jesus ; and society transformation in the principles of Jesus. The reality of the Kingdom of God must pass from the stage of voices crying in the wilderness to the definite faith and service of the sovereignties of Jesus. The final task of the living Church as the instrument of the reign of God in the earth is the spiritualizing of democracy, the transformation of class-socialism into a divine brotherhood, and the witness of the Gospel unto the uttermost ends of the earth. This task is not easy, since it implies the bringing of the total life and thought of men under absolute obedience to the spiritual and ethical demands of the Reality of Jesus. That the task will be accomplished is not a peradventure of history. Its fulfilment works through the limitations of men, but it does not rest in them. Time and eternity meet in this challenge of voices. And there followed great voices, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The mission of the Church and the Reality of Jesus are not weak and vain things amid the strife of tongues. The Kingdom of God is a divine certainty in earth and in heaven.



## XXIII

### THE TIGER GATE

It belongs to the Reality of Jesus that He put His trust in the average man, and that He had a sympathetic mind in relation to the man in the street. "As he passed by he saw," and in observing found opportunity to call men from the "receipt of custom" and the "traffic of affairs" into the wider and deeper life of the Kingdom of God and of a loyal and intelligent discipleship. He found relief from challenging religious leaders and their official discussions, in a friendly intercourse with men and women in the byways of life, and in a frank statement of the realities of God to "the common people, who heard him gladly." Jesus was not afraid of human life. He put His hope and trust in the humanity of God. The man in the street was His hope in the sowing of the seed of the Kingdom, and His compassion for the multitude of men was a well-spring of good intention and saving energy. We have made an effort to express the Reality of God as it must make appeal to men. We have sought for some expression of the Religion of Jesus as He has given us a soul experience of it. We have tried to make in some measure clear the meaning of that word concerning which there is so much confusion in its use—the Church—and to affirm its reality.

None of these things are remote from common life. They present the Reality of Jesus in relation to the actual life of men. No study of the Reality of Jesus to-day can evade the issue as to religion in general and Christianity in particular. Practically every institution of man to-day is in the melting-pot of history and at the bar of judgment as to reality. There is no escape from the sharp, wistful, yearning eyes of the street. The day for make-believe is past and gone. Organized Christianity has no way of escape from the quick eyes that search out things along the highways of toil or the pavements of pleasure.

The problem of reality is twofold. It concerns the inwardness of religion and the externals of life, and meanwhile the eyes of the multitude look on with much the same kind of eyes as those that watched Jesus as He spoke the words of the "Sermon on the Mount" to His disciples, or took His way from the Roman Prætorium to the Cross. In one sense it is difficult to interpret what those eyes mean. In another the interpretation is obvious. It is the search for reality in the bewilderment of the hour. Religion may misconceive itself and the multitude may be left to discover in some half-blind way the meaning of it all. The reality of the disclosure is final enough. It lies here. Calvary consists in three crosses, not one. Jesus is set in relationships. He is revealed in the place of irrevocable action. The issue lies in response. It rests in acceptance or rejection. The starkness of this whole situation raises the question of the reality of organized Christianity, and the relations of men and movements to the Reality of Jesus.

Confusing as the terms are in which men use the word Church, the plain issue is the truth of the witness as to Jesus, and the claims He makes on men to a complete obedience. It is engrained in the popular mind that the Churches are not representative of the mind and will of Jesus. The Churches cannot ride off on some theory of invisibility as an escape from either their own inherited blunders or from their inadequate vision and obedience. It may be granted that no human institution is perfect, that every great treasure is in earthen vessels. Nevertheless, the signs of the times are not wanting as to the need for the Churches to make searching inquiry as to the reality within themselves.

It may be also granted that much of external criticism is beside the mark. That the man in the street is not by any means everything that he would have us believe, or even that he is for the moment deeply concerned as to spiritual character and moral responsibility. The street is wide, and it is filled with all sorts and conditions of men. The way to the Temple is both steep and narrow, and the traffic through "the Tiger Gate" is unceasing and sometimes violent. At all times it is urgent. The narrow and the steep way neither makes appeal to its toil nor to its gaiety.

"The road is hilly  
Outside the Tiger Gate,  
And striped with shadows from a bow moon  
Slowly sinking to the horizon.  
The roadway twinkles with the bobbing of paper lanterns,  
Melon-shaped, round, oblong,  
Lighting the steps of those who pass along it;  
And there is a sweet singing of many *semi*  
From the cages which an insect-seller  
Carries on his back."

This is the way of the world, and it takes some effort to divert attention to the silent waiting sanctuary. Jesus was confronted by the same vision, and the thought of His disciples drifted to an obvious question to which He gave no immediate or definite reply, except to concentrate their attention on the reality of things and the standard of values. The allegory of the Two Ways is almost as old as literature and has passed into a proverb.

"Are there few that be saved?" say disciples, as they contemplate the street or the highway of the gate. The reply of Jesus is not evasion but concentration. "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter thereby. For narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it."

The first question at issue is the view of life and whether there is reality in the shrine that dominates the hill. Through the Tiger Gate the toilers pass. Has organized Christianity the secret of reality and life for them? Through the Tiger Gate the sons and daughters of the world's laughter travel. Has organized Christianity any message for them as to the secret of joy? Through the Tiger Gate the mourners go and the paper lanterns cast but pale shadows round their footsteps. Has organized Christianity any secret to reveal to them as to the heart of grief and the destiny of man?

If organized religion has ceased to speak in terms of life, then the Churches must pass into a reconstruction of their forms of expression and into a new revelation of their embodied life. The multitude with eyes that



throng the Tiger Gate create the need, and the sanctuary must find the solution. Democracy is at the door on its own trial and asking questions.

For the moment what is described as "Labour" dominates the gate. We read: "Among the working classes, especially those attached to the Social Democratic party, there exists a bitter hostility to the clergy and to all institutions which they control," or "Church-going on the part of any member of the proletariat is disloyalty to his class," or "The American working man hates the very shadow that the spire of the village church casts across his pathway." Organized Christianity is left in no doubt here as to a drift of opinion from what is described as "the Church." The references given express an attitude of hostility and antagonism.

Where enmity is not manifest, there is a covert implication that the Churches represent an institution in decay. An editor of the *Labour Leader* has written: "In these later days the Church has fallen almost into obscurity as a power in the moral and civic life of the nation. Its form remains, its habiliments are still gorgeous, but it walks behind and not in front of the State, and its gestures and speech are almost unheeded in the great march of the nation."

When such references as these are possible, and yet a claim made as to the Reality of Jesus, a situation is revealed that demands honest inquiry. It has become a kind of creed in "Labour" politics to anathematize the Churches and to express admiration for Jesus, and it is not, we are told, an uncommon experience in "Labour" assemblies to have the Church hissed and the name of the Galilean applauded.

"Among the working classes," writes an observing mind, "only one quality of religion remains, and that is respect and reverence for Jesus Christ." "The talk of the Churches," says another student of recognized soberness and insight, "is for the most part as intelligible as Hebrew to the modern hand-worker; but in the teaching of Jesus he seems to hear the welcome accents of a familiar tongue." The same idea comes out in the claim of the leaders of "Labour" to intense conviction as to the truth of Christianity and the need for the Religion of Jesus. A man of sympathetic experience writes: "An intimate acquaintance with many thousands of working men has taught me that, even when there is no hostility whatever to religion, there is a sort of subconscious and unrecognized feeling of antagonism to the Church."

Such a situation as this requires a candid analysis. There is unreality somewhere. Is the profession of admiration for Jesus sincere, and has it the root of spiritual desire and moral earnestness, or is it an attempt to camouflage a situation and to exploit a social and economic programme in the name of "the Carpenter of Nazareth"? Is "Labour" sincere in an intention of ethical responsibility and prepared to obey the rule of Jesus? The spiritual basis of character is the question at issue. Jesus stands for acceptance or rejection in terms of the love of the Cross and the economic of the "Sermon on the Mount."

We doubt very much if the movements of "Labour" in their inwardness, and as seen in these last days, are ripe to stand the spiritual test. No lip service to the name of Jesus can of itself commend either a theory of

industry or a practice of conduct that denies the sacrificial service of life and the universal law of honest work. The very name of democracy to-day is in danger of being profaned, and the dignity and self-respect of personal character is on the verge of being lost, when a perverted class-consciousness sets itself to assert a theory of life that is rooted in self-interest and self-assertion. The chief danger of "Labour" lies within itself. We believe that it will in the issue cleanse itself from the baser elements within itself, and that it will emerge with a realized vision of the spiritual and moral basis of life. If love, justice and righteousness are its watchwords, they must be born again within itself. Jesus demands reality in the confession of His name. The way is steep beyond the Tiger Gate.

The fact is, the best friends of "Labour" are found within the Church, and the noblest working men in the land are members of the "Body of Christ" and the free servants of His grace, truth and love. The hope of "Labour" lies in this direction, and the modern days of "Labour's" discipline may yet prove to be her divine instruction. Her leadership is sound when it is spiritual, and when "Labour" becomes captive to the Reality of Jesus her ideals will be in sight.

The office of all men of goodwill is to remove misunderstandings. A hopeful divination of other men's thoughts and a real clearness as to issues are the open road to progress. It is to be hoped that the words of a devout leader of "Labour" may be a prophecy in the heart of the rank and file of the masses of the people. "Any man who would find his heaven in a heaven of material benefit for the masses of the people has got,



I think, a heaven that will prove a great disappointment when he comes to realize it. A man has something more than that. I believe that man is a spiritual being. Unless you cultivate the spiritual side of man as well as the material and mental, you have not half saved the man. When we have done our best by 'Acts of Parliament,' we never can bring this world back again to purity and permanent happiness, except by the pure and undefiled religion of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." So we see the Religion of Jesus at the heart of "Labour" is the dynamic it needs.

It lies, also, with organized Christianity to renew herself at the heart. It is not without reason that men within the portals of the Tiger Gate have been haunted with the idea that the Church is a mediæval or feudal institution, hostile to progress, knowledge and social reform. One might take an illustration from the history of the Church of England, and at the same time acknowledge the noble service of that Church and her ardour of faith in modern days. In the *History of the Church of England*, edited by the late Dean of Winchester, the last two volumes deal with recent times; the first volume contains three hundred and fifty pages, the second four hundred and fifty; of these eight hundred pages recording the things of importance in the last hundred years, four hundred pages are occupied with Ritual questions and Rubric Controversy. These things, one supposes, have value, but what vital interest have they for the men and women who go through the Tiger Gate? If, therefore, one of the noblest among the Churches has been so hampered, others may well have a worse record in relation to reality for the masses of men. The problem lies before



all the Churches to realize themselves, and to gather in and unite their forces in a living service.

I have read somewhere that the eyes of a confirmed opium-eater are like the eyes of a toad that has been incarcerated in a rock and restored at last to light by the stroke of a mason's hammer. If the Churches have fallen into a fossil condition with a drugged vision, it is high time to awake. The Church that will not see and serve will have its candlestick removed out of its place. On a visit to Lhasa a party of military officers and journalists viewed from a gallery the religious ceremonies in the "Temple of the Many-Handed Buddha." They beheld the monks of the shrine sitting amid the reek of suffocating candles, engaged in silence, in ceremonies and in ritual chants. These were their contributions to what was called "Immemorial Truth." The butt of a rifle slipped from the boot of an attendant soldier and rang with a sharp sound on the stone pavement. The spell was broken and the whole party were suddenly recalled to reality, and with one accord clattered out from the unholy shrine; which thing is an allegory and "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

It is not the duty of the Church to make terms with the spirit of an age. She is in possession of a reality that she dare not barter in the world's market. It is her duty to discern the times. The problems of the Tiger Gate may not be possible of quick or off-hand solution. Modern society, civilization and industry are in a process of discipline and revelation. Solutions are in the process, and the inwardness of things is being disclosed. It may be the Church's

wisdom, as it is her faith, to not make haste. Hesitation indicates neither blindness nor cowardice. The reality in things needs to be seen, and there have been periods in history again and again when faith and vision did wisely to tarry. This was no mere passive delay. It was the regathering of spiritual energy within the Church herself.

The Reality of Jesus does not linger, though it may appear to wait for the period of the Church's renewal, discipline and prayer. It is the Church's duty to be alert and on the watch with a clear eye and a sanctified will for the open door of her opportunity and service. We are convinced that there never was a time, since the days of the waiting of the first disciples, when more hearts and minds were alive to the Reality of Jesus in expectant hope than to-day. The modern Church stands on the threshold of a new spiritual and ethical awakening. We have the persuasions of faith that she is not inert behind the lattice and that the Pentecosts of history have their own way of arriving according to the manner and method of the divine surprises in the mind and will of Jesus. A spiritual democracy energized by the Holy Spirit is the vision of the hour within the Tiger Gate. A great deal more than "Labour," as it is at present constituted, passes through that gate. "Labour" is learning in the school of experience that man is set in relationships and that the spirit of humanity does not depose one tyranny to erect another. "Labour" requires to see itself in proportion and in truth. Relationships cannot be overridden by violence. There are inexorable laws that work beneath all confusion. The highest of these laws is

love, but there are others that are equally inevitable in their practical working. There are principles in economics that take silent and swift revenge upon their violation. There are laws, moral and spiritual, that are unceasing in their invisible action. There is neither partiality nor hypocrisy in the law of work. A sense of personal and collective responsibility and the distinctive note of honesty in work is the law of life and of bread. It forbids the exploitation of toil with as stern an authority as it inculcates sincerity in the worker. It is the enemy in the healthy body of prosperity and progress both of parasitic capital and parasitic labour. The law of love and the law of work bring to naught every false form of socialism. Life in its relationships is in the long run inexorable in its claim upon reality.

Humanity as a whole, its knowledge, its science, its diplomacy, its commerce, its society and its industry, pass through the gate. The reconstructing principles of right relationships agitate the gate. The human ideal of a national and international unity is a thought that the modern consciousness quickly responds to. The response lacks neither nobility nor intention, but its action is, for the most part, a blind endeavour. The intellectual, social and moral confusions of the time require crystallization. Theories arrived at in the light of paper lanterns, and the singing of songs within "the cages of the insect-seller," do not bring the reality for humanity much nearer. The humanity of the Tiger Gate is still a remorseless thing. What is needed is humanity in God, the vision of the living Universal Church in the very throng of the gate. This is no vain vision.



It is a reality in process through Jesus Christ. It is the visible action of invisible spiritual forces. The invisibility of spiritual forces in no way implies an invisibility of results. Time works here as with all other great forces. The greatest forces in Nature are invisible, but their results are plainly seen. The forces of the divine working in humanity are definite in manifestation. "For the invisible things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." The visible embodiment of God within the gate is the living significance of the Church of God. It comes to pass in the action and interaction of men of goodwill.

This rightness of intention is the starting-point of reconstructive energy. It transforms the songs of the cages into the songs of redemption. It is the prelude in the heavenlies to the coming of the Reality of God in men. The incarnation of love, truth and righteousness in men is the divine intention. It is not a theoretic purpose. It finds expression in the Personal Life within the gate. Salvation and redemption are disclosed in the living Reality of Jesus, and the listening hearts of men begin to understand the meaning of the song of heaven over earth's confusion: "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth Peace to men of Goodwill." Reconstructions begin in the realized power of spiritual forces taking root in the goodwill of the heart. When the divine love is realized in the gate, the Reality of Jesus will be on its way to fulfilment and the Church will have ceased to look out of the lattice upon the world of men. The embodiment of Jesus will be seen in action, and the action



will be none other than this—the creation of a personal discipleship that counts the cost, and the re-creation of society in the vocation of the sons of God. It is no vain dream of the “City of God.” Calvary is set in human relationship within the very “Tiger Gate” itself. Jesus lives and saves.

## XXIV

### THE LATTICE

OUR study of the Reality of Jesus in the world to-day deepens in responsibility and in intensity. We have recognized the reality of the Church as the Embodiment of Jesus in humanity through "the habitation of the Spirit." We have seen that it is no other than the plain fact of history that when Jesus spoke to Peter concerning "the Living Temple on the Rock," he spoke of something vital and of something that has taken form and visibility in the world, and that the central fact of the Church's life, the Calvary of God, is set up in human relationships within the Tiger Gate of man's traffic and endeavour. We have sought to understand the importance of the view men take of the Church as seen from without, and that the Churches of God cannot pass by in unconcern the attitude of the street towards them nor the eyes of the multitude fixed on them. All this is of urgent importance, but it is of far deeper and vaster importance to make some inquiry as to how the Church views herself and with what eyes she looks out upon the world. It is this that stirs the heart and conscience of believing men. If the sight of the Tiger Gate has interest, the vision of the lattice has a fascination that searches the soul. It is an inquiry of the Church concerning herself,

her vision, and her service, as she looks out from the windows of her own heart and beholds the men and movements of a New Age.

The Church to-day will scarcely speak of herself in terms of the troubadour. The sense of ideals not yet realized is too keen for the romantic expression of her love, her faith, and her expectancy. She is self-conscious—too self-conscious for gaiety of heart. Perhaps she has an inward consciousness that her love has not been loyal enough, and there may be on her a mood of irritation arising out of her own sense of failure. At any rate she is aware that she looks through "magic casements on the foam of perilous seas." The troubadour of her ideal sang blithely when he exclaimed, "Who is this that looketh forth, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an enemy with banners?" We sing the same soberly.

If the Church to-day, out of a sincere conviction as to realities, speaks with more restraint, she is still confident that she looks forth from the lattice as the Bride of Christ, and the poetry of her soul and the expectation of her heart is not dead within her. She is still confident of a sure word of prophecy. Stress of weather has not broken her, and the discipline of experience does but deepen her love. Her resolution is braced in the conviction that she possesses in Jesus establishments and comfort that no traffic in the gate can prevail against. She has the present spiritual worth within her of honest self-examination and of a desire to more fully understand her Master's will and to perform His service. To look forth on the modern world from an inward renewal of heart and a deepened inwardness of vision

and character is for her the new experience of the reality of her life and the affection of her heart.

It must flash across her mind and conscience that the first and supreme thing in her faith and service is her presentation of the reality of religion—the Reality of the Religion of Jesus. To sit in holy reverie in contemplation of the past will not suffice her. The realities of the present are urgent.

There are verities belonging to the past that are part of her continuous life. Her soul cannot part with these, but it will be part of her self-examination to sift the past so that nothing but reality abides with her. If the past would hold her with a dead hand concerning her creed and life, she must have the vision born of experience and the will braced by knowledge to remove what is unreal.

There can be no doubt about the attraction and the fascination of the Church's memories. She knows she has come to this hour with the makings within her of history and experience. She can recall persecution, conflict and death, and the sealing of her witness in the world. Apostles, prophets and martyrs have spoken in her, to her, and through her. The history of human progress is marked by the epochs of her life.

She is in a position to assure herself as to Reality, and to cleanse and discipline her soul. It will not, however, avail her to rest in the past except in so far as the present vision from the lattice proves the past a living thing for her to-day. Antiquity is no guarantee of truth; truth is the life in antiquity that continues to live, and is applicable. If the Church views herself as the "spoiled child" of the centuries, just as ancient



Judah did, and ceases to see, to know, and to obey, she will go into exile for her modern chastening and betterment. She cannot sit within the lattice in reverie. The exhibition of the Realities of Jesus for the present day of her absolute service is demanded of her.

It may be quite true that a halo gathers round the remembrance of a mediæval day. For the student of history there is a fascination in the Church of the Middle Ages. To behold an institutional Church in the form of a spiritual and temporal authority forming the consciences of men and of nations, is a sight to attract attention. The whole setting of life takes on a glamour all its own. A halo of thought gathers round the chivalry, the feudalism, and the churchmanship of those days. It enters into the handicrafts of life, and a glamour also rests upon the problem of Industrialism. So much is this the case, that it has become the fond imagination of some that the spiritual awakening of modern life will come along the lines of mediæval ritualism, mysticism and an applied form of Guild Socialism.

The thing is a dream without reality. The facts of history and experience are too stubborn for any such illusion. The reverie within the lattice must face the facts. The interior life of the modern Church and the spiritual and moral re-establishment of society will never come along the lines of an institutional Church on the model of mediævalism. The modern Church has more than one thing for which it owes no deep debt of gratitude to Augustine. When Augustine blundered into the confusion of thought which identifies the Church of God and the Kingdom

of God, he sowed a seed-plot that had strange consequences. We may not quarrel with history, we can only learn from it. So, then, when with this idea Augustine started out on his great masterpiece, *The City of God*, and wrote—"The glorious City of God is my theme in this work, which you, my dearest son Marcellinus, suggested, and which is due to you by my promise. I have undertaken its defence against those who prefer their own gods to the Founder of this city—a city surpassingly glorious, whether we view it as it still lives by faith in this fleeting course of time and sojourns as a stranger in the midst of the ungodly, or as it shall dwell in the fixed stability of its eternal seat, which it now with patience waits for, expecting until 'righteousness shall return unto judgment,' and it obtain by virtue of its excellence final victory and perfect peace,"—he expressed an unrivalled, true and exalted idea and ideal of the Church. He little thought the use that would be made of his working out of his theme in terms of the Kingdom—the *De Civitate Dei*. It remained for the future to disclose the development and the Roman Curia to fill in the details. The result was the mediæval conception of the Church, which transformed Augustine's idea "of the ideal kingdom of God into a vulgar earthly monarchy, with all the accompaniments of conquest, fraud and violence." The result is written in history. Mediævalism seen in its culminating results has neither halo, truth nor glamour. Scholasticism in theology, corruption in morals, the arrest of knowledge, and the crucifixion of progress are the handwriting of history on the romance of mediævalism. It took the "Humanism of the Renaissance" and the

"Spiritual Awakening of Europe" to dethrone a false idea of the Church and to cleanse the moral channels of society. No system of things, however, can blot out the ideal and real in the soul of man.

Great souls lived and yearned and died within the shadow of mediævalism, but the thing itself stands for what it was, and to this day the world is struggling to liberate itself from the last relics of mediævalism in religion and feudalism in society.

The reverie within the lattice gives place to the vision of reality. When all criticism is acknowledged and profited by, any candid and fair-minded judgment of the modern Church in all her forms of institutional expression will admit that there is a new sense of reality at the heart of the Church and an evident effort being made to meet the New Age in a quickened loyalty to Jesus Christ and to the world mission of God's divine redemption. A new sense of unity is animating divided Christendom. A new sense of consecration wedded to knowledge is finding fields for a more universal service. A new sense of faith in the living and abiding reality of truth is giving a new sense of confidence to the firm and intelligent presentation of the Gospel. An increasing realization of the world's need of healing from its wounds is inspiring the faith and service of believing men. A sense of the ruthlessness of sin and selfishness is turning the hearts and consciences of men to the source of divine love, righteousness and peace. The unity of man is being seen as only discovered in union with God. The worldly temper—the effort to serve God and Mammon—is being steadily banished from all vital Church membership. The outlook of the



Church is broadening because it is deepening. Just because there is no demand made by an artificial public opinion, the inner membership of the Church is freer in its action and more responsive to its duty. What the Church loses in quantity she recovers in quality.

It has always been the fortune of the Church to survive the prophecies of pessimism and depression. The Church from an innate sense of delicacy ought not to give herself to self-assertion. There has been a natural and rational latter-day trend in her expression by way of intellectual and ethical apologetic. A living Church has always something of the reserve and restraint of her Master. "Mine hour has not yet come," may often be her inward prayer, as she awaits the times and the interpretation of the movements of men. In times of reckless assertion outside her borders and of irresponsible criticism at the hands of those who cannot make her the instrument of their own violence and self-assertion, she does well to be silent in the hall of the world's judgment. She abides strong in her own resources and in the knowledge of this plain fact—that when all is said and done, the manifest truth is this, that the removal of the men and women who are members of the "Body of Christ" out of the nations and society would be the removal of the spiritual and moral leadership of the world and the leaving unto men their "house desolate."

The romance of victory may still light her eyes within the lattice, and the song of the troubadour expresses her heart's desire. For as some one has expressed it : "Something of the perfume of Christianity is in the air of the world ; the wholesome salt of its



ethics is in the very blood of the race. The man of no faith is still the child of whole centuries of faith. The choice of the soul does not lie in the last analysis betwixt Belief and Doubt but betwixt rival forms of Belief." Those in the closest touch with life to-day are made aware of the Reality of Jesus. It is no less a free lance in the socialism of life than Mr. Bernard Shaw who says : " We may as well make up our minds that man will return to his idols and his cupidities in spite of all movements and resolutions until his nature is changed." It is on this fundamental that the work of the Church proceeds. The vision of service enlarges. The saving message finds its goal. Humanity does not outgrow the need of a Saviour, and the Church that presents and conveys the Reality of Jesus has always an increasing horizon of faith and service. It is the prophetic temper and the vision of man's needs that gives the Church her programme, and it is her presentation and possession of the Gospel that gives her a secure place in the hearts of men. Her outlook is the vision of God for the salvation of men. It is a world outlook in the immediacy of a consecrated and heroic service.

About a mile from Davos Platz there is a little church. It is built on a steep slope beneath overbearing cliffs. The end gable of the church faces the dangerous heights. This gable is built with immense strength and shaped like a double plough. It is known as an avalanche church. When ruin rushes down from the mountain heights, the avalanche is caught on the plough-shaped edges and the bulk of destruction is divided and scattered. Down beneath the church and within its shelter the peasants build their houses, and

within its shadow they dwell securely. Herein is a symbol of the Church of the living God and of the Reality of Jesus. There will be no question of the relation of the masses of men to a Church of reality, shelter and salvation. The souls and sons of men know where they dwell securely.

## XXV

### THE VOCATION

THERE is a healthy and a wealthy significance in the word "vocation." The atmosphere of its meaning for the modern Church has passed from the cloister. The invitation (*κλήσεως*), the summons of God, is universal, and it is of the nature of a living action in the world. A man's vocation is his "calling." It is that to which his personality and energy is applied. Rightly understood, every man's work ought to be his vocation. It puts the ideal into the routine of labour. It places personality in a right relationship to daily duty. In the lower sphere of its action it is part of the problem of an industrial age. The ideal of labour is to give man a sense of his manhood and to place employment in the living relation and interest of a vocation. In the higher reaches of the soul it is the spiritual and rational sense of "the Voice"—the calling of God in the mind, the heart and the will. This call comes in the realization of discipleship and service. Now we have seen that the first and last end of the Reality of Jesus is the re-creation of the personal life of man in the life of God. The manner and method of Jesus to this end was to create and instruct disciples. Jesus lived on earth to call and to instruct disciples. He lives to-day for the same end. He re-creates and educates

men in the love and temper of His life and in the service of His obedience. This is the manner and method of the Gospel. It looks simple, but it is revolutionary and goes down to the roots of personal character and life. It is in the personal and collective realization of this that the vocation of God passes into humanity and the redemption of the world is slowly but certainly accomplished.

Sectional pharisaism may exist to compass sea and land to make one proselyte, but the Church of God exists to make disciples. The reality and the method of Jesus is justified in the event. It amazes us even as it convinces us. The vision of the world's redemption in the creation of personal discipleship looks like the impossible. If it were not the Reality of God, it would be the impossible. The last event of the earthly life of Jesus reads like the dream of a visionary. It is the reality of the Church and her mission. "And he led them out until they were over against Bethany : and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven." "All authority is given me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and MAKE DISCIPLES of all the nations, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you : and, lo, I am with you every day, until the close of the ages." It amazes us, but the action of it is its verification after "the passion" of two thousand years.

Discipleship is the slow but certain witness that shall yet fill the world with the "knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The Reality of Jesus brings to naught the imaginations of men.



In the experience of men the call of Jesus comes as the realization of truth and life. It is the *self-surrender* of the soul and the entry into a new kingdom of ideals and service. This vocation concerns every man, and it is exercised in the liberty of the Gospel. In these days when every man pretends to be a psychologist, and scarce any man searches deeply his own mind and conscience, it is well to realize the reality. In these days when the preachers of social betterment are as numerous as the sand by the seashore, it were well for men to inquire closely as to where social reconstruction begins. At all times when the Gospel is proclaimed, it were well to make certain as to the reality of discipleship. The gifts and the vocation of God are something He never goes back upon. They are without repentance. Security of soul is always declared in terms of righteousness. Pardon is always received in terms of purity. Salvation is a gift in terms of faith-relationships and service. The range of the divine calling consecrates the personal soul to the social and final fulfilment of the vocation of God in a redeemed humanity. Is it any wonder, then, that Jesus warns men to "count the cost" of this discipleship and to realize the value of the venture of the soul? On the divine vocation of man hangs the redemption of the world.

One of the most illuminating and intense incidents related in the Gospels arrests the whole mind and imagination, and compels a restatement of the reality of discipleship. Vocation moves into the open field of life and ceases to walk within the shadow of mediævalism or amid the restrictions of puritanism. It concerns every believing man, and strips religion

of every artificial and unreal thing. We read : " And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus went before them : and they were amazed ; and as they followed, they were afraid." The reality brought with it the awakened sense of the actuality in things. Tension and wonder and awe and foreboding thrilled in the hearts of alert and watching men. The realism of Mark leaves nothing unsaid. This incident follows on the culminating and terrible utterance of Jesus as to the reality of discipleship.

Quite frankly Jesus had raised the question as to the need for discipleship. " Why callest thou me good ? " " Call no man Master ! " The realization of moral and spiritual character lies in the self-realization of truth and liberty, and its proof is its action ! This raised the whole issue as to the wonder, worth and absoluteness of discipleship. Discipleship is the response to the highest once it is seen. Discipleship is the witness to the highest within ourselves. It belongs to the Reality of Jesus that He finds men. Once Jesus is seen, the vision brings with it the compulsions of a free and complete obedience. The lack of response is the witness to the self-debasement of a divided or a doubtful heart. It involves the tragedy of the soul in rejection and betrayal.

The barrenness of man's spiritual desire lies in his half-consents. Men try to walk where they have no ground to stand on, because they have no reality within them. Their vocation is a compromise. Now discipleship must preserve the integrity of the soul. It renounces that it may receive, but it can never in reality be realized by a divided mind or vacillating will. In its essence it is irrevocable, and the Cross

measures its sacrificial intention. It therefore is no harsh saying, but in the issue a happy reality: "Who-soever of you that renounces not all that he hath cannot be my disciple."

This discipleship is not realized in a false literalism, but in the loyalty and absolute allegiance of the calling and vocation of Jesus. The furrow of spiritual and moral destiny demands a single sovereignty in the soul. "No man, having put his hand to that plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The peril of love and life lies in the entanglements of adverbs. Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, BUT. Jesus has only one tender, wistful and completely definite reply, "COUNT THE COST."

Once entered upon, the school of Christ's obedience is a sanctified progress and an increasing joy. It is a vocation of life not according to an external rule of conduct, but in the power of an endless life. Discipline by rule is better than no discipline at all, but the law of life in Christ Jesus is a law of the inwardness of reality. This is the ideal. An inferior kind of spiritual life may be lived "under rule," but the superior life is lived in the liberty of the sons of God. Whatever value obedience to an external rule of life may have, it lacks the vitality and progress of the inwardness and liberty of Jesus. The farther men drift into a mechanical obedience the more artificial religion becomes, and the vital-growing culture of the soul is arrested. Jesus demands all, but He only desires to receive it in the truth and liberty of life.

The amazement of awe never leaves the living soul, but life enlarges in the surprises of grace and the transfigurations of character. The richness of the



divine vocation unfolds itself. Ideals take action and human endeavour in a continuous service, which ripens to a harvest that only the sickle in the hand of an angel can reap. It is the divine naturalness of life as manifested in Jesus that arrests and holds attention, and gives us to see how the world can be saved by the new order of life that Jesus discloses and His vocation applies. When the living action on the hillsides of Galilee and the highways of Judea concentrates upon the Cross, we see what the vocation of God is among men, how simple, how transcendent, how acute in the passion of the heart and how inevitable in the resolution of the will, how complete in service and how triumphant in fulfilment.

This simplicity of love to the utmost revealed in Jesus makes transparent the reality of discipleship and makes clear the task that lies ahead of mortal men, who under the consecrations of the Cross undertake the redemption of the world.

A perfect love casts out fear. Hesitation and doubt only come in with disloyalty. The great Augustine is noblest when he deals with the personal consecrations of the heart, and it was one of his great moments when he said : " He loveth Thee less, O Lord ! who loveth anything along with Thee, which he does not love because of Thee." Here lies the innermost secret of the vocation of the heart. With this there is no limit to the sweep and boundary of holy realization and consecrated service.

" To the assembled folk  
At great St. Kavin's spoke  
Young Brother Amiel on Christmas Eve :  
I give you joy . . .



Shall we not therefore, friends,  
Resolve to make amends  
To that great inspiration of the heart  
To grudge not, to cast out  
Selfishness, malice, doubt,  
Anger and fear ; and for the better part  
To love so much, so well,  
The spirit cannot tell  
The range and sweep of her own boundary ? ”

To love so much ! so well ! that though the vision tarries we wait for it ! Is this far vision of the world won for Christ but a dull dream of the weary-hearted, or is it the enthusiastic certainty of joyful disciples ?

Humanity seems to take its sorrowful way through the centuries, creating for itself its own *via dolorosa* by its own sins and perversities. The “ Way of Jesus ” seems out of sight. His *via dolorosa* seems but a distant tragedy on a hillside of Judea, and a sorrowful regret to waiting and perplexed disciples. The method of Jesus and the manner of the coming of the Kingdom of God seems a slow and lingering movement. To win the world for Christ through the witness of discipleship and the fidelities of love seems a remote and intangible action. It seems too ideal. It has nothing of the noise and clamour of modern effectiveness about it. It becomes the scorn of men amid the insolence of world forces.

A little quiet reflection and a sense of the Reality of Jesus assures the mind and heart of believing men. The Reality works. It passes from personality to personality. It leavens society. It becomes the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Forms of the world’s culture rise and perish. The Reality of Jesus

revives spent forces and decaying civilizations. A new *life-form* enters into the race's life. Over the waste of years and the unfulfilled destinies of men the Spirit of God and of Truth broods. There is "a Voice" that is never silent in the heart of humanity. The "Calling of God" never ceases, and the vocation is revealed in the discipleship and spiritual service of men. This Reality of Jesus has the note of the inevitable and the Kingdom of God comes. The secret of the Gospel may be hidden, but it is never inactive. It is this faith that is the faith of the "Word," and it becomes the Reality of Jesus to the "uttermost part of the earth." There is no failure in the Gospel of the Blessed God. There is and always has been failure in the fidelity of the witness of men. Nevertheless, Jesus puts His hope and trust in men and in the issue. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. The life moves and the divine energy works. I see a man in a prison cell; he has the vision in the beginning of things; he has been caught up into the life of Jesus, and the passion of the "Calling of God" has filled his soul. He is writing to a little community of believing men who are just emerging out of pagan culture into the realization of the reality that is in Jesus. The situation would seem trivial set in the midst of the forces of empire and the lusts of the world. There is nothing trivial in the "sweep and boundary" of the writer's vision. He sees the immediate need of bracing the faith and witness of the little community of faith, and of deepening in them the sense of fidelity and consecration and hope. He sees much more. He sees the great human unity and the goal of the divine purpose and energy in the

Reality of Jesus and the Fatherhood of God. He sees something created and existing in Jesus, according to what he profoundly terms the VERY VARIED WISDOM of God. He sees humanity's destiny in the divine love and vocation. He sees a something in the world which is destined to fill it with the wonder and worth of loyal and consecrated discipleship. He sees a redeemed humanity. The Calling of God is not in vain, and the reality is visibly coming to pass before his eyes. It is no dream, but the realism of history in the salvation of men, a world-process of the spiritual recovery and the moral redemption of man. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your vocation ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." This is what the prisoner of the Gospel of God sees. It is the vision that fills the eye of all good men to-day—the ideal and the fulfilment that resides in the secret of the Reality of Jesus

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